MYSTERY MAGAZINE

VOL. 11. No. 47 OCTOBER 15 1919

PRICE 10 CENTS

DETECTIVE STORY

THE HOUSE WITH 30 STEPS

BY

RALPH·D·PORTER

"WHEN THE CLOCK STRUCK 13" is the Title of Our Next Feature Story. Read It!

MYSTERY MAGAZINE

Vol. II. OCTOBER 15, 1919. No. 47

Copyright, 1919, by Frank Tousey, Publisher, New York. All rights reserved. Entered as Second-Class Matter November 5, 1917, at the Post-Office at New York, New York, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

Published Twice a Month by

FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher

168 West 23d Street, New York

N. Hastings Wolff, Pres.
E. Byrne, Treas.
Charles E. Nylander, Sec.

LU. SENARENS, Editor

NOTICE—No letters will be answered or manuscripts returned unless accompanied by sufficient postage. The publishers disclaim responsibility for the loss of unsolicited manuscripts. Authors must name price wanted for submitted material.

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE:

Domestic, Single Copy	10 Cents
Domestic, Yearly	$2.50
Canada	$2.75
Foreign	$3.00

All remittances should be sent by express money order, P. O. order, check, registered letter, or draft to insure safety. We will not be responsible for money sent otherwise.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FEATURE STORY — PAGE

THE HOUSE WITH THIRTY STEPS, by Ralph D. Porter 1

SERIAL STORY

A DETECTIVE'S MISTAKE, by Gilbert Mackey 37

SHORT STORIES

THE SILVER WITCH, by Police Detective Finnerty .. 20
A QUEER CASE, by John Q. A. Hart 35
STRANGE EXPERIENCES 40

MISCELLANEOUS MATTER

Building His Ark 34

CURRENT NEWS

Sprouting Oak Grain Removed from Ear—Poisons of the Borgias—Bones of Ancient Camel—A Pie Machine—To Search for Kruger's Gold—Dyes from Snails—Grain Dust Explosions—Queer Food—Fat Men—The Deepest Wells in the World—Love of Gorilla for Boy 42

THE HOUSE WITH THIRTY STEPS

A MYSTERIOUS DETECTIVE ROMANCE

By RALPH D. PORTER

CHAPTER ONE

DALTON GETS A CALL

RICHARD DALTON had been connected a short time with the Boston force, and thinking the field too narrow for rapid advancement, he had come on to New York with a letter of introduction to Hon. Michael Stoker, a great and shining light in Tammany Hall, whose influence had been sufficiently powerful to secure him a position with Dan Brady's Detective Agency.

Not that it had amounted to anything so far. Brady had scarcely noticed him. The truth was the detective had had many such young assistants forced upon him. Usually they amounted to nothing, and it had been his custom to give them all a fair trial, after which, if they displayed no marked ability, he was pretty sure to let them drop. Dalton's time of trial had come.

"Mr. Dalton, I'm going to start you on a very important case," said the old detective the moment they found themselves alone. "Now will be your opportunity to display what sort of stuff you are made of. Pay strict attention to what I say."

"I shall do my best to please you, sir."

"Deeds, not words, count with me, Mr. Dalton," replied the detective. "Listen, please."

Dan Brady took from his pocket-book a scrap cut from a newspaper, and read it aloud:

"THE PEARL STREET POISONING CASE.

"There have been no new developments since yesterday in the mysterious poisoning case in the old Mayhew Mansion in Pearl Street near Peck Slip. Horace Stearns remains in a condition of nervous prostration brought on

by excitement. Howard Malcolm, his cousin, is still absent, though he has telegraphed from Chicago his intention of returning home at the earliest possible moment; Miss Mary Mayhew is feeling better since the funeral, but finds herself much shaken by the terrible shock of her uncle's death, and is far from well. The will has not been found, and as yet it is certainly problematical to whom old Timothy Mayhew's immense estate will descend. The police have been completely baffled. Detective after detective has tried to solve the mystery during the last two weeks, but with no success whatever. Our reporter was informed last night that the famous Dan Brady had been engaged. This is as it should be. We can only regret that Mr. Stearns had not adopted so wise a move before. Now we confidently predict results."

Dalton had patiently listened to the end.

"Is this the case you want me to take hold of?" he asked.

"It is the case on which I want your help. Do you know anything about it?"

"I have read all that has been published."

"Tell me what you know."

"I know that Timothy Mayhew was an old bachelor, and very rich, that he had taken to live with him recently two nephews—sister's sons—and a niece, the daughter of his only brother, with the idea of making the one who pleased him best his heir."

"Go on."

"About two weeks ago the old gentleman was found dead in his bed—poisoned by a solution of strychnine, the doctors said. He had retired to his room in perfect health the night before, locking the door, as was his custom, on the inside."

"Yes—yes! That's it. I see you have followed the case closely. What is your theory about it?"

"My theory was that either one of the nephews or his niece must have administered the poison. The strangest part of it, though, was the fact that no glass was found in the room, nor trace of the poison, and further that the door had to be broken open, for it was still locked on the inside next morning when Miss Mayhew, becoming alarmed at her uncle's absence from the breakfast table, caused it to be forced."

"That's a common theory, Dalton. I see many objections to it."

"For instance?"

"For instance, Howard Malcolm is not at home and has not been since a week previous to the poisoning. He had a quarrel with his uncle and left the house. Only now have the police authorities succeeded in obtaining his address."

"Is it not very singular that he should not have read of the murder and hurried back to New York?"

"Very. But it seems he did not. Have you posted yourself upon the whereabouts of his cousin, Horace Stearns, on the morning of the murder?"

"He was not in the house, sir. He rose early and went for a long walk, not returning until after the door had been forced."

"I see you are well informed."

"I have been watching this case, Mr. Brady."

"So much the better. Now what I want you to do is this: The missing will must be found. I have already visited the house and interviewed Mr. Stearns. He is a very sick man. Still, I do not regard his condition as at all dangerous. It is simply the result of a prolonged nervous strain. He is most anxious about the will, particularly so that it should be discovered before the return of his cousin. You will go there and search thoroughly. Somewhere near midnight expect me. I have a particular reason for appearing at that hour, and you will mention to no one that I am expected, except to Mr. Stearns himself."

"Very good, sir."

"Probably you would like to know what my reason is?"

"Name it, Mr. Brady."

"Ghosts! They say that the old house with thirty steps is haunted; that a ghost walks there almost every night."

"Of course, you don't believe it, sir."

"I neither believe nor disbelieve it, but of this much I feel sure: The ghost and the secret of the poisoning are closely connected. There has been too much delay about this business already. To-night it must be your business to try and find that will, mine to catch the ghost. I think you understand."

Dalton was still trying to understand the matter when he reached the corner of Peck Slip and Pearl street, and stood before the house of thirty steps, one of those curious antiquated old mansions, relics of by-gone days, a few of which still remain in New York.

It was a noble old structure, large, square and solidly built with arched windows and a high winding stoop, which one entered upon at the side.

Dick buttoned his overcoat more closely about him, for the wind swept down Pearl street sharply, and paused before the house. He wondered why Brady had been so particular to count the steps. There were just thirty of them sure enough.

"He sees everything," muttered Dick. "I wonder if I shall ever get to be as sharp?"

He looked up and down the block at the surroundings of the mansion. On the right was a barber's shop with a costumer's establishment on the floor above; beyond that were the colored lights of a druggist's store, the entrance to which seemed to be around the corner on Peck Slip. A swing sign, black with age, which hung from the angle of the corner house, bore the inscription, "Dr. Letheridge." In former times it was quite customary for doctors to be also druggists. Evidently Dr. Letheridge was one of the last of this class.

On the left of the old mansion was simply a dirty tenement, which, presenting nothing either attractive or peculiar, failed to hold Richard Dalton's attention for a moment. He ran hastily up the thirty steps, and rang the bell.

They were a long time in answering Dick's ring. The front of the house was dark save for a light which burned in one of the upper windows, and a faint glimmer in the hall. The detective, waiting patiently, was just wondering if the room behind those closed blinds could be the death-chamber, when suddenly the door was opened by a frightened-looking colored girl who was evidently laboring under great distress of mind.

"Oh, Lordy! I t'ought yo' was Miss Mary!" she exclaimed. "What yo' want?"

The officer explained in accordance with Brady's instructions.

"Yo' kin come right in," said the girl. "Miss Mary told me to 'spec' you. Oh, I'se so glad youse come. Marse Horace is tooken werry bad all of a suddent. I had to run for the doctor. He's wif him now."

"Shall I go right up?" asked Richard.

"Guess yo'd better. Dere ain't no one else but me in de house, and now youse have come I'm goin'. I hain't gwine ter stay here no longer. Wouldn't a-stayed as 'twas, only fer Miss Mary; but I telled her I'd go ter-night, and if

she don't come back it ain't my fault. I won't stay—that's flat."

"It's nothing to me what you do," replied Dalton, who in all the thirty years he had lived, had never heard anyone talk faster. "Where has Miss Mayhew gone?"

"Gone out. How I know where?"

"And Mr. Stearns is sick up-stairs, you say?"

"Yes."

"Which way?"

"Right up dem stairs in front of yo'. Las' door to de lef'."

The detective waited no longer, but hurriedly ascended the stairs.

In the distance he could see a light shining through an open door, and he thought he could hear voices talking in the room. As he drew nearer, he heard a man speaking with a deep voice:

"It will soon pass off, Mr. Stearns. This attack, though startling, amounts to nothing. I will mix you a draught which will speedily do the work."

"That's the room," thought Dalton. "The doctor is with him now."

He hesitated whether to intrude or not, but upon second thought he could see no harm and pushed on.

Entering at the open door he could see a young man of about his own age seated in an easy-chair with his legs covered with blankets and propped up on another. He was in his shirt-sleeves, and half reclined there with his eyes closed, his face very pale. So noiselessly had Dalton entered that the invalid was not disturbed.

Neither was a large, heavily built man with black hair and side whiskers, who stood partly behind the open door of a closet, the shelves of which were filled with bottles. This man was evidently the doctor. He was engaged in pouring something from a small bottle into a tumbler half filled with water—so deeply engaged, in fact, that he never heard the operative as he stepped noiselessly across the carpet behind him and looked over his shoulder, making two startling discoveries at the same moment of time.

The bottle bore a red label marked with skull and cross-bones, with the word "POISON" in big capital letters beneath. This was discovery the first and it almost took Richard's breath away.

The second was made at the same instant.

The man wore a wig, and his bushy side whiskers were false!

CHAPTER TWO

VERY MYSTERIOUS

TREMBLING with excitement Dalton clapped his hands upon the doctor's shoulder and stepped back a pace.

The man wheeled about instantly. Meanwhile, the detective, who had shot a hasty glance behind, saw the invalid staring at him with wide open eyes.

"Who are you? What do you want in my room?" he demanded in faltering tones. "I—I am very sick—I cannot be disturbed."

"Yes! Who are you? What do you want here?" echoed the doctor. He made no effort to conceal the bottle which bore the poison label, but he hastily kicked the closet door shut.

"You shall soon know who I am!" cried the officer. "Mr. Stearns, this man is trying to poison you. Look at him—he is in disguise!"

It was a bold speech and a foolish one. Of course the accusation was not believed; moreover, it threw the man upon the defensive at once.

"Hear him, Stearns," he laughed. "Some drunken tramp wandered in from the street. Sukey must have gone out and left the door open. Here, you, fellow, get on out of this or I'll call the police!"

He placed the glass on the table, and advanced threateningly toward Dalton, still holding the bottle, over the top of which he kept his thumb.

"You lie and you know it!" shouted the officer. "I am a detective—I am Dan Brady's assistant. Mr. Stearns, who is this man?"

"My physician!" gasped the invalid. "You—you must be mistaken. Oh, this excitement, it is killing me! Oh, my heart, my heart!"

"Leave the room!" hissed the doctor, springing fiercely at Dalton. "I'll settle with you down-stairs."

"I don't leave without you!" cried Richard, clenching with the doctor.

He had scarcely touched him, when he received the entire contents of the vial full in the face. Strange sensations seized him instantly.

The room and everything it contained began whirling around. He was struggling with the doctor—he knew that, but it seemed as if he were in the clutch of a giant. The next he knew he was whirling down the stairs. He could feel each step as he went bumping over it. He knew when he landed, and struggled to rise.

It was of no use.

He did gain his feet, but it was only to lose them again, and fall prostrate upon the floor.

Once more he tried it, grasping the banisters, fighting the terrible sensations which were now creeping over him inch by inch. He was alone, he could see that.

"Oh!" he gasped. He could not get up; he was sinking down. An awful drowsiness was seizing him with an iron grip.

Sinking still, he fell heavily. It was useless; he could not shake it off. One more effort, just one.

He put out his hand and clutched the banisters feebly. At the same instant a despairing cry rang out from the room above.

"I'm poisoned! Doctor! Doctor! Oh, God, that man was right."

It was horrible to hear this frantic appeal and to know that it was beyond his power to act. Just then the doctor came hurrying down-stairs. In the dim light of the hall he could not see that his face was as pale as death. Confused though he was, Brady's assistant realized that his only chance lay in shamming death. He closed his eyes and waited. In an instant he felt his wrist seized and an unsteady hand feeling bunglingly for his pulse. Even then he wondered how any doctor could be so dumb.

"He's dead, confound him!" he heard the man mutter. "I didn't think the mere inhaling of the drug would work it, but it has. Perhaps, though, he swallowed a drop or two. I'm sorry for the poor wretch, but he brought it upon himself."

Then the door slammed, and Dalton knew that the doctor had left the house. What a wonderful thing is the power of will!

Dalton was one of those positive characters who by sheer force of will can almost move mountains if they try.

"I won't yield to it! I won't! I won't! I won't!" he muttered. Then with a mighty struggle he caught the banisters and pulled himself up. In another moment he was on his feet.

"Hello! Hello! Help!" he shouted, his brain spinning like a teetotum.

He had hoped to call up Sukey, the colored girl, but did not succeed.

"Follow your man when you find him. If you can't arrest him, follow him—never let him out of your sight!"

These had been the words of Dan Brady, spoken when he first began to talk with Dick about the duties of a detective.

They came back with full force now.

"I must keep up! I will follow him!" the operative kept muttering. "Oh, for strength to shake off this terrible drowsiness. Strength—strength!"

He staggered to the door, walking like a drunken man for all the world. How he managed to get down the steps he scarcely knew—for a moment his senses seemed to slip away from him altogether. Then he was himself again, leaning against the barber's pole, minus hat and overcoat. He had taken these off upon first entering the Mayhew mansion, and it is unnecessary for us to add that he did not stop to put them on now.

Dalton swung his arm around the pole and tried to brace up, but it was hard work.

The cold wind sweeping along Pearl street struck his burning brow refreshingly, and seemed to give him strength.

At that moment the creaking of the old sign at the corner attracted his attention.

Dr. Letheridge!

If any one could help him in the present emergency, Dr. Letheridge was probably the man.

"That's it! An antidote is what I need. Oh, give me strength to get to that drug store! Strength! Strength!"

There was not a soul in sight. The night was a cold one, and the hour late—it was already after ten—still it was strange that no one happened to pass.

He let go of the barber's pole and made a wild rush for the corner, gained it safely, succeeded in getting hold of the window just in time to avoid a fall.

The store was dark. This was at once a surprise and a disappointment. He had seen the colored jars sparkling, but this must have been by light reflected from the street lamp nearby. The detective now worked his way around to the door, and grasped the knob. It yielded—the door flew open, and Dan Brady's assistant staggered into the store and sank down all in a heap upon the floor.

Again unconsciousness came over him, but it was only for a moment. During that moment, however, he might have seen a big head protruding down a flight of stairs on one side of the store which led to the floor above. Beside the head there was a hand, and the hand held a candle which was flashed for a single instant upon the officer.

Then the head was withdrawn as suddenly as it had appeared, and with it vanished the candle and the hand.

Dalton pulled himself together once more, and managed to get upon his feet. The store was pitch dark now, lighted only from the street.

"The doctor! I want the doctor!" he called, feebly. "Is there any one here?"

"Hello! Who's down there?" came the reply from above-stairs.

"I—I want the doctor. I'm very sick. Don't be long, for God's sake! I've been poisoned, I think."

"Poisoned! Great heavens, you don't say so! Come up—come up right away!"

Thus spoke the voice at the head of the stairs.

It was coming on him again—that terrible drowsiness. Something had to be done.

The detective staggered up the stairs, which he could just distinguish by the lights of the street.

"Come on—come on!" called the voice. "Quick—quick!"

At the head of the stairs he found himself in a plainly furnished bed-room. Before him stood the very doctor who had flung the poison in his face.

"Ah! My bold young detective!" cried the doctor. "I've got you now. Next time we'll see if you will interfere with my plans."

He had held his right hand closed while speaking, carrying the candle in the left.

"You! Is it you?" gasped Dalton, staggering back.

The doctor suddenly opened his right hand, which Dick could see held a small bottle much like the one he had made use of in the sick room.

In an instant this bottle was held at Dalton's nostrils.

There was a chill, a shudder, and Brady's assistant sank apparently lifeless at the doctor's feet.

"A good detective spoiled!" muttered the doctor, bending over him. "But I admire the fellow's spunk!"

CHAPTER THREE

DAN BRADY TRIES TO INTERVIEW A GHOST

THE deep-toned door-bell of the old Mayhew house on Pearl Street rang sharply as the tall clock standing inside at the foot of the broad stair-case struck the hour of twelve.

There was no answer to the ring.

Within the house all was as still as death, and Dan Brady, after waiting a long time patiently, pulled the bell again.

"It can't be that young Dalton has disobeyed my orders and gone off," he muttered, "but even if he had, where's Sukey? Where's Miss Mary Mayhew? That light must burn in the chamber where old Mayhew died. Plague take it! What's the matter with them all?"

He rang again, still receiving no response. Then Brady became alarmed.

The door of the old house with thirty steps was fastened by a spring lock—that he knew.

There were also bolts on the inside, but by shaking the door he became convinced that they had not been drawn. It was simply the spring lock which prevented him from entering—that and any feeling of hesitation which he might feel at breaking in a man's door in the middle of the night. Now no such scruples bothered Dan Brady. The house was practically in the hands of the authorities, and he felt that he had the right.

In a moment he had thrust a curiously-shaped instrument into the key-hole—something looking like a twisted piece of wire. The door flew open and Brady stepping in closed it after him and stood listening in the hall. But for the loud ticking of the tall clock all was as still as death, and a curious feeling came stealing over the detective—something that he would have found it hard to describe.

"What can it mean?" he thought. "Young Dalton must have come here. It can't be that Mary Mayhew and Horace Stearns have both gone away."

He determined to begin a tour of the upper chambers and satisfy himself upon these points at once. He now ascended the stairs and rapped upon the first door on the left. There was no answer. Determined upon solving the mystery, Brady boldly opened the door, flashing his electric lantern within the room.

"Horace Stearns' bed-room," he muttered. "Strange! The bed undisturbed—no one here!"

Making certain that there was no one in the room, the detective now crossed the hall and threw open the door of the chamber opposite.

"Howard Malcolm's room!" he muttered. "I can scarcely expect to find anyone here."

Nor was he disappointed.

This chamber was deserted like the first.

"There should be some one in this room at all events," muttered the detective, taking the next door on the left. "This is Miss Mayhew's. It is hardly credible that she can have left the house."

But he rapped upon the door again and again without response. Now, when the detective opened the door and found the room entirely deserted he began to feel seriously disturbed. The chamber was evidently that of a lady and was in great confusion. The bed was undisturbed, but it was littered with articles of female apparel, so were the chairs and the floor. It looked for all the world as if the occupant of the room had hastily gathered up a few belongings and taken a hurried flight. And this suspicion was confirmed by the tumbled-up condition of the bureau drawers.

"It can't be that the girl is the poisoner—that she has become alarmed at something Dalton did or said and run away!" was the thought which flashed over Brady's mind.

It was just at this moment that the detective caught the sound of stealthy footsteps upon the stairs. A strange chill seemed to strike through his frame, for he was thinking of the ghost.

Immediately recovering himself, he stepped out into the hall, which was dimly lighted by a single gas burner below, and leaning over the rail, looked down.

A tall figure, shrouded from head to foot in a long, trailing white garment, was slowly ascending the stairs.

It was the ghost.

Now, Brady was not a particularly superstitious man. Yet, as a good Catholic, he could scarcely help a belief in the reappearance, under certain conditions, of the spirits of the dead. He believed this, and yet he was not without a realizing sense of the danger of deception which must ever remain with such a belief. Thrusting aside a natural sense of fear, he waited for the figure to reach the top of the stairs, fully resolved to rush forward and catch it in his arms. To his amazement he found himself seized with a sudden faintness. Try as he would to shake it off, he was utterly incapable of moving a step. Now the figure had reached the top of the stairs, and, pausing, turned toward the detective a woman's face as white and ghostly as the face of a corpse.

"Speak! Who are you? What do you want?" faltered Brady, damp perspiration gathering upon his brow.

"Death! Death! Death!" said the figure. "Death is in this house! Be watchful! Be vigilant! Find the will!"

Thus speaking the figure seemed to glide along the passage toward the door of old Timothy Mayhew's chamber at the end. Then a bright light shot out, illuminating the recesses of the hall. Coming suddenly it seemed to dazzle the eyes of the detective. When he looked again he saw that the figure had disappeared.

"Merciful powers! What can it mean?" gasped Brady. "Am I mad? Am I dreaming?"

At last the spell that bound him was broken.

He ran along the passage, and in a moment had gained the door of the death chamber, from which the light came forth. He perceived now that the door was open, and that the light at least was of natural origin.

It proceeded from a lamp which burned on a table, and beyond the lamp he could see Horace Stearns seated in a chair with his legs enveloped in blankets resting upon another, apparently asleep.

There was, however, no trace of the ghostly woman in white.

As Old King Brady glanced about the room to assure himself of this, his eyes rested upon the body of a young man lying prostrate upon the floor.

A second look showed him that it was Richard Dalton.

The detective lay there like one dead.

"Mr. Stearns! Mr. Stearns! Wake up!" cried the old detective, hurrying to the chair.

There was no answer. The sleeper never stirred.

"Mr. Stearns! Mr. Stearns!" repeated the detective, putting his hand upon the marble brow.

The hand was instantly withdrawn in horror.

The face of Horace Stearns was cold with the damp of death!

CHAPTER FOUR

IS THIS THE MAN?

"DALTON, your story is amazing."

"All the same, Mr. Brady, every word of it is true."

"Do you mean to tell me that you saw Dr. Letheridge actually pour out poison and give it to that unfortunate man in the chair?"

"I did, indeed, Mr. Brady."

"But how do you know it was poison?"

"I only judge from the fact that it was poured out of a bottle with a red label marked poison; from its effect upon Horace Stearns, not to even mention its effect on myself."

"Humph! And you claim that you went to pieces in Dr. Letheridge's office on the corner, and knew nothing until you felt me shaking you and found yourself lying upon the floor of this room?"

"That's it."

"Don't you think, young man, that your story is rather fishy?"

"Mr. Brady!"

"Not that I mean to charge you with lying until I have some evidence to that effect. I would be a fool to do that. I have been through too many strange experiences myself to cast doubt and suspicion upon the experiences of others, but——"

Oh, the tone of that but! It cut Dalton to the heart. Yet who could blame Brady? He spoke only as he felt.

Startled at finding Horace Stearns dead in his chair and Dalton lying, apparently in the same condition, upon the floor, Brady, for the moment, was completely taken aback. Dead the young nephew of the house certainly was. His features were rigid, his brows cold and clammy, that his eyes were wide open and staring lent no hope since his pulse was still.

Turning to Dalton, however, Brady, while expecting to find the condition of his young assistant similar, found it entirely different. He was breathing faintly, his heart was beating faintly, and so was his pulse.

Brady saw a life was to be saved.

He knew something of medicine. Something to quicken the action of the heart—that was what was required. Brady had the means at hand in the shape of a pocket flask. When he forced a small quantity of its contents down Dalton's throat the effect was marvelous. In a mo-

ment there was a deep sigh, the next and he turned over on his side and began pinching his leg as though it hurt him.

"Let go!" he muttered, "let go of me, I tell you! Dr. Letheridge!

"Can he be drunk?" thought Brady. "I ought to have smelt his breath before I gave him the whisky. It is too late now."

Then for the moment he felt that it was scarcely necessary. He felt satisfied that Dalton was drunk, for he scrambled to his feet and went reeling about the room, extending his hands helplessly before him, his eyes rolling wildly, his face convulsed with pain. Brady jumped forward, seized him, and forced him in a chair.

Now came another change, and a marvelous one. The convulsive motion of the face seemed to cease all in a moment, and he opened his eyes, staring about the room in unfeigned amazement.

"Mr. Brady!" he exclaimed. "You! How—how came I here?"

"That's for you to explain," replied the detective. "What ails you? What is the meaning of all this?"

"I—I don't know! I thought I was in the doctor's office on the corner. Mr. Stearns! Oh, look at Mr. Stearns!"

"No need—Mr. Stearns is past any help that we can give him—he is dead."

"Dead!" the operative cried. "No, no! Don't say so! See, I ain't dead! The stuff didn't kill me—perhaps there's still a chance for him!"

"He is dead!" replied the detective confidently. "Look here, Dalton, I want you to explain yourself. I must know what all this means?"

Richard told his story as rapidly as possible. Each succeeding moment seemed to give him new strength. By the time he had finished he found himself feeling much as he usually did; and this fact, when he remembered his strange sensation, puzzled him more than anything else. He had been perfectly frank and open. He had told Brady everything and kept back nothing. It did seem hard to have his word doubted now.

"You don't believe me," he said flushing.

"I want to believe you, but your story is such a wild one. Answer me one question. Did you stop to take a drink on your way to the house?"

"I never tasted liquor in my life, Mr. Brady."

"Then I must believe you. Still you are wrong. I gave you a drink just now."

"Probably that is what saved my life. Probably it counteracted the effect of the poison."

"Possibly. Tell me, though, what did the stuff in the bottle smell like?"

"Like peaches."

"Ah! Hydrocyanic acid! The mere smell ought to have killed you. This doctor—describe him."

"He was a large, heavy man with a great deal of black hair and bushy side-whiskers. The hair and the whiskers were false."

"That is certainly the description of Dr. Letheridge," mused Brady, "but his hair and whiskers are not false."

"This man's was."

"Who was in the house when you entered?"

"I saw no one there but the colored servant girl, this doctor, and Mr. Stearns."

"You didn't see Miss Mayhew?"

"No. The servant said she was not at home."

"She did not say where Miss Mayhew had gone?"

"No; but she said she wouldn't stay in the house any longer herself."

"She has gone already, I judge. But to return to the doctor. You say you come up behind him and caught him before the open closet, pouring poison into a tumbler of water?"

"Yes."

"You further stated that the shelves of the closet were filled with bottles, all of which looked like medicine bottles."

"Yes."

"Look here."

Brady strode to the closet and threw open the door.

To Dalton's utter astonishment the shelves, instead of being filled with bottles, were piled up with books.

"What do you say to that?" demanded the detective.

"I—I don't know what to say. I can't understand it at all."

"We must have a doctor here to examine this young man's condition—not that it's of any use, though. He is certainly dead."

"Where are we to find a doctor?"

"On the corner."

"Not Dr. Letheridge?"

"Yes, Dr. Letheridge; he is an old and skillful physician. Though I have no personal acquaintance with him, I know his reputation to be first-class."

The young detective seemed to hesitate.

"You are afraid to go with me to Dr. Letheridge, it appears," said Brady, eyeing him searchingly.

"I'll go!" exclaimed Richard. "I'll go with you or I'll go alone, but if I go alone and he makes the least attempt to lay hands on me I shall shoot him."

"Come, I like that tone," murmured Brady; "it goes further to make me credit your remarkable story than anything else you have said. We will go at once."

He paused only to make another and most searching examination of Horace Stearns, but the result was the same as before. There did not seem to be the slightest doubt that the unfortunate man was dead.

Accompanied by Dalton, the old detective now left the house and hurried to the corner of Peck Slip. The office of Dr. Letheridge was dark just as Dalton had seen it. The sign still creaked as it swayed to and fro in the wind above the door.

Brady tried the door and, finding it fastened, rapped smartly. No answer was returned.

"Not in!" he muttered. "What are we going to do?"

"He was here a while ago, fast enough," said Dalton.

"Bang! Bang! Bang!" went Brady's fist against the doctor's door.

"Hold on there, judge! What in thunder do you want to break my door down for?" roared a jovial voice. "I'm a-comin' as fast as the gout will let me. Just you hold on!"

"The doctor himself, by all that's good," cried Brady under his breath. "Here's more mystery. Dalton, look there!"

As the detective spoke he pointed across the way at a group of men, who were just emerging from a saloon on the corner of Pearl and Ferry streets.

They were bidding each other good-night in a loud, boisterous, yet friendly way.

"Good-night, Doc!" shouted one.

"Good-night, old fellow!" answered the voice which had spoken about the door.

"I shall claim my revenge to-morrow night, Doc! No penny ante next time; it's got to be dollars, or I'm done!"

"You shall have it your way, my good boy. Good-night!"

"Good-night!"

"Coming, judge, coming!" called the man of medicine, as he hobbled across the street.

"Look at him! Look at him well!" whispered Brady, catching Dalton's arm. "That is Dr. Letheridge."

"Are—are you sure?" stammered the young man.

"Yes, yes. It is the man you saw in the Mayhew house."

"He looks like the man."

"Watch him closely. Hush now! He is here."

"What's wanted, gentlemen?" asked the doctor, hobbling up.

"A man is dead or dying in the Mayhew house, doctor."

"Bless my soul, you don't say! Another! Who? Which?

"Horace Stearns!"

"That looks suspicious! Suicide, eh? People were talking too much."

"Not suicide, doctor, but another murder, I fear."

"God bless me, you don't mean it! I ought to have been on hand and ready for business, but the human brain demands and will have the rest and recreation. I was indulging in a little game of poker with a few friends at the corner. Come, sir, we will go at once."

"How long has your game lasted, doctor?" asked Brady, as they turned away.

"Ever since supper—about half-past six."

"And you have been in that saloon all that while?"

"Well, yes. I know it ain't just the thing, but like our immortal Patriæ Pater, G. W., I cannot tell a lie."

"Then you have not been in your office since half-past six?"

"No. Have you been after me before?"

"This young man has."

"Sorry. I was close at hand, you see, if he had only known."

They had reached the house now, and Brady, falling back, allowed Dr. Letheridge the opportunity to be the first to ascend the steps.

"Is that the man?" he breathed in Dalton's ear.

"No," replied Dick in the same low tone. "No, that is not the man."

CHAPTER FIVE

THE MYSTERY OF THE THIRTIETH STEP

"IS he dead, doctor?

"What doubt can there be? Rigor mortis has set in. His limbs are stiff and cold."

"And the cause of death?"

"Well, of course, Mr. Brady, the surrounding circumstances and the strange story you have told me would seem to indicate poison; but I confess to you that I can detect no evidence that Horace Stearns has been poisoned. A post mortem would be necessary to develop that."

"Hydrocyanic acid for instance."

"Ah! I see you are well posted. Hydrocyanic acid would leave no trace behind."

"Would the mere smelling of hydrocyanic acid act upon the human system in such a way as to produce unconsciousness?"

"The unconsciousness of death—yes."

"But a weak solution?"

"I doubt a weak solution having that effect. If the story of that young man is true the poison in the bottle was probably a combination."

"Of what?"

"Now you've got me. I don't know, but I know what I think."

"What?"

"I believe his story to be a lie."

"And the reason?"

"Look at my face and read your answer, Mr. Brady," replied the doctor, with energy. "I am the man he describes as the poisoner. Don't deny it. I am not to be deceived. I have heard your story, sir, without comment. I know what is in your mind. It is an outrageous lie, sir. I haven't left the saloon over the way since 6:30, as half a dozen people can testify. Look at my hair, pull my whiskers! Is the hair a wig? Are my whiskers false."

"Doctor, doctor! Pray calm yourself. There is nothing to be gained by getting excited."

"Excited, sir! It is enough to make any one excited. To be accused of——"

"Tut! tut! I have not accused you. Hear me. As we were ascending the steps my young assistant whispered to me that you were not the man."

"He did! Why in the name of sense didn't you tell me before then, and relieve my mind?"

Brady did not tell him that he had kept silent in order that he might study his actions while he believed himself accused.

"It is all right, so far as you are concerned, doctor."

"No, it ain't all right. Summon the shadower. He must go with me to my office to point out the very spot where he claims the attack to have been made."

"Dalton!" called Brady, opening the door and looking out into the hall, "Dalton!"

"Yes, sir," answered a voice from an adjoining room.

"Come here, if you please—you can finish your search some other time."

It was the chamber of death in which Brady and Dr. Letheridge had carried on this conversation. Richard, upon their first entrance, had been charged to search the house, and the doctor and the detective had gone into the room alone. First, Brady allowed Doctor Letheridge to examine the young man who lay upon the chairs, watching him narrowly as he did so. The doctor showed no hesitation. His examination was brief and thorough. He pronounced Horace Stearns dead. Then Brady told Richard's story, to which the doctor listened with wide open eyes. Old Timothy Mayhew, it was believed, had died of poison. Now there was another. To find his name mixed up in such ugly business was quite enough to stir Dr. Letheridge up and it did.

"Young man, look at me well!" he cried, as Dalton entered the room. "Am I the man who attacked you here and at my office?"

"You are not. I told Brady that," answered Richard in his usual quiet way.

"Do I look anything like him?"

"You look exactly like him. But your hair is your own, though, and so are your whiskers. His were both false."

The doctor seemed to shake all over with suppressed rage.

"Come! Come with me to the office!" he exclaimed, "you shall show me where you went. I'll bet fifty dollars to five that it wasn't to my place at all."

"One moment," interposed Dan Brady. "Dalton, have you examined all the rooms in this house yet, or were you only partly through when I interrupted you?"

"All through, sir."

"Did you discover anything of suspicious character—anything to alarm you?"

Brady was thinking now of that shadowy form in white which he had seen himself. Dick's answer, however, was full of promptness.

"I saw nothing of the sort," he said.

"Let us go," reiterated the doctor. "I want to have this thing out."

"Pardon me, doctor, one moment. This closet—let us take a careful look at it. What have we now?"

The sound of wheels had been heard outside, wheels which seemed to stop as they came in front of the house.

"Some one coming here?" exclaimed the doctor.

Brady stepped to the window and drew aside the curtain.

Yes, an automobile had stopped before the door, and as the detective looked, he saw a young lady alight, hand the chauffeur some money, and turning, begin the ascent of the thirty steps. Immediately the car was driven away.

"It's Miss Mayhew returning!" he exclaimed.

"Poor girl! How shocked she will be!" exclaimed the doctor. "Have I got to break the sad news?"

"Do you know her?"

"Oh, very well. She was in love with young Stearns, and he with her. Poor thing! Poor thing! It will break her heart."

"Run down and open the door for her, Dalton!" cried Brady. "Tell her that I am here—that I must speak with her before she comes upstairs. Upon my word, I don't know what to say," he added to the doctor. "Still, I think I had better break it to her myself."

He was still standing at the window, and looking down upon the stoop. Miss Mayhew had, perhaps, gained the twentieth step, when Dalton started down-stairs.

With an air of fatigue she toiled on, and reaching the top, at last seemed to pause upon the thirtieth step.

Brady turned his head and listened, expecting to hear the hall door slam, but it did not. Looking out again, he saw that Miss Mayhew had disappeared.

"Can she have come in, and I not heard?" he thought.

Just then Dalton appeared on the thirtieth step alone. For a minute he stood there looking curiously up and down. He appeared surprised and so was Brady a second later. For even as his eyes rested upon Dalton, the detective seemed to vanish from his sight.

"What does this mean?" exclaimed the old detective.

"What?" demanded the doctor.

"That's what I want to find out!" cried Brady. "Doctor, follow me."

He darted through the door and hurriedly descended the broad staircase, the doctor following. When they reached the hall, they found the door standing wide open, but not a trace of either Dalton or Miss Mayhew was to be seen.

"Why, where are they?" cried the doctor, greatly astonished. I thought she came in."

Brady hurriedly told what he had seen.

"Amazing! More mystery!" cried the doctor.

They were standing in the broad vestibule now, before the thirtieth step, looking up and down the street. It did not lessen their astonishment to find that neither Miss Mayhew nor Richard were in sight. Back into the house they hurried. Parlor, dining-room, kitchen—every apartment on the floor was searched. The lower part of the house was as deserted as the grave. While Brady lingered in the parlor, Dr. Letheridge returned to the hall. Suddenly the detective heard him utter a sharp exclamation through the open door.

"Quick, Mr. Brady! Quick!" he called.

"Look! Look there!" breathed the doctor.

He was pointing up to the head of the stairs.

There it was—the same white, ghostly form which Brady had seen before.

With a quick, gliding movement it advanced over the carpet and vanished through the door of the chamber of death.

CHAPTER SIX

MORE MYSTERY

BRADY dashed up the stairs two steps at a time, gaining the room but a few seconds later than the disappearance of that ghostly thing in white.

It was just the same as before.

The room, when he entered it, was unoccupied, save for the still, cold form in the chair. One thing, however, Brady did not fail to notice. The closet door, which he had left open when called to the window by the sound of the approaching auto, was now closed.

He sprang toward it and flung it open.

Books piled upon the shelves confronted him. Between the shelves and the door there was not room for a person to stand, and when Brady clutched the lower shelf and tried to see if it were movable, he found it quite firm. By this time the doctor had joined him, and their investigations were continued together. They amounted to nothing. When at last they gave it up, they found themselves as much in the dark as before.

"Do you believe it was actually a ghost?" questioned Dr. Letheridge, who appeared to be greatly excited.

"I believe nothing, and know nothing. Before I get through with the business, though, I propose to have penetrated every mystery which hangs over this evil house."

"You do well to call it an evil house."

"Why do you say so?"

"Because it is so. For a century it has had the reputation of being haunted. The Mayhew who built it is said to have been a pirate and a smuggler."

"Yes—yes."

"It is said that he murdered his second wife, a young and beautiful Spanish girl whom he picked up somewhere in the West Indies, and buried her in the cellar."

"Well?"

"I don't know any more except that it has always been said in this neighborhood that at times her spirit walked."

"The next time it walks my way I propose to bring it to close quarters, then."

"They say that its appearance means death."

"Well, death is here."

"True. But——"

"You are superstitious."

"I grant it. Strange things have happened in this house."

"And the strangest thing of all is the disappearance of Miss Mayhew and my assistant."

"Of Miss Mayhew, yes; but not the young detective."

"Why?"

"Because he's an infernal scoundrel. He lied about me, about the whole business. He saw he was cornered, or would be once I got him into my store, and he promptly skipped."

"I cannot believe that. Let us go down. Let us search again."

And they did this. Not only were the lower rooms searched thoroughly, but the upper ones, too, even to the attic. Nothing was found of Miss Mayhew or of Dalton, however, nor was anything further seen of the ghostly figure in white.

"There is something hidden beneath this strange disappearance," said Brady with emphasis, when they found themselves at last before the front door again. "It must be investigated at once."

"But how?"

"Let us go into the vestibule—let us examine the top step. If there had only been one, and that young Dalton,

I might have believed your theory. Yet I stand ready to swear that neither of them went down the stoop."

"You must of course be mistaken."

"I am not—I cannot be! It is impossible for me to discredit the evidence of my senses. I know what I saw."

As he spoke, Brady turned his attention to the vestibule. There were four doors here, two outer and two inner. The space between was a papered wall, representing a vase of flowers. It was the same on both sides. The flooring was of white marble tiles. Positively the detective could find nothing in the least suspicious about the vestibules of the house with thirty steps.

"Look here!" exclaimed the doctor, suddenly; "I've got an idea, Mr. Brady."

"What is it?"

"Years ago, when I was a boy, I heard my grandfather say that his father had told him that there was some secret means of communication between this old house and the river front. You see, my family have resided in this neighborhood nearly as long as this house has stood. This has just occurred to me. I wonder I did not think of it before."

"Do you mean an underground passage?"

"Yes."

"I should not wonder. These old New York mansions contain many secrets. I have had some experience with underground passages myself."

"Of course it may be all a yarn."

"And on the other hand it may be true. But where can the entrance be?"

With his fist the detective struck the vestibule wall. Certainly it seemed to give back a hollow sound.

He struck it again and the sound was repeated, yet search as he would he could discover no secret spring. This was on the lower side of the vestibule. The wall appeared perfectly smooth and was papered as we have already said. When Brady came to dig through the paper with his knife he found simply soft plaster behind.

Thus the hollow sound might be explained by a small space between the laths and the brick wall behind them. When the detective struck upon the upper side there was the reverberation just the same.

"I tell you what, doctor," he said. "You stay here. I will go down to the foot of Peck Slip. I want to see how the land lies about South street, to discover where the secret passage, if it really does exist, would come out."

"Upon my word, I'd rather go with you."

"Yet some one ought to stay here. The house should not be left alone."

"Well, I'll stay. How long shall you be gone?"

"Not over a quarter of an hour probably. It is only a step."

"Be as quick as you can. It is getting on toward morning. I want to go to bed."

Brady hurriedly descended the steps and turned down Peck Slip, gaining the corner of South street a few moments later on. Here alongside the old Fulton Market, with its crumbling rat ridden walls, he paused. It was very still—would have been, rather, but for the wind, which came whistling at the detective's back with terrible force.

Before him lay innumerable fishing smacks and other small craft, crowded into the wide slip with a few larger ships farther out, and the twinkling lights of Brooklyn beyond.

There were five ships moored along the South street wharves. The wharves themselves, moreover, were uncovered.

Determining in his mind where a straight line running from the house with thirty steps would end, Brady fixed upon the first pier to the left of the fish market, and walked out upon it the full length, pausing at the end, and looking back.

Yes, he certainly was in a line with the old house. Before him on the west side of South street was a sail loft with a fish dealer's store on the ground floor. It seemed wholly improbable that the secret passage, if one existed, could terminate beneath that building and not have been discovered long before.

"But why must it terminate under the building? Why not under the wharf beneath which he stood?

Scarcely had this thought crossed Brady's mind, and it came like a flash, than he became conscious of the sound of muffled oars beneath his feet, precisely as if a boat were being pulled under the wharf. Out at the end of the wharf where the detective stood there was no ship lying; all was clear and nothing but the river beyond. Now suddenly a small boat was seen to glide out from under the wharf, pulled by two men, whose features were pretty thoroughly concealed by low slouch hats and the upturned collars of their coats. Between the rowers, in the center of the boat, lay two persons, a young man and a girl. They seemed either to be asleep or helpless. Over them an old tarpaulin had been thrown, so that the detective could not see their heads.

It was enough, for Brady was certain he could recognize in the man the features of Dalton.

Quick as thought he flashed his lantern down upon the boat. Yes, it was certainly Dalton.

As the light burst upon them the men began to pull furiously.

"Stop there!" cried the detective. "Ship your oars." He drew his revolver and pointed it down at the boat.

"Don't shoot!" cried one of the rowers, throwing up his oars.

But the other half-raised himself and thrust his hand behind him.

The detective's revolver barked.

"I'm shot!" some one sang out from the boat.

Echoing back came two shots from below, and Brady dropped his weapon just as he was in the act of firing again, and pitched forward over the end of the wharf.

CHAPTER SEVEN

TURKED OUT

BRADY was standing upon the very end of the pier, leaning down for a better aim over a rotting bulkhead, and the shot struck him in the right arm, just grazing the flesh. The sting of the wound caused him to let go his grasp upon the revolver. He made one frantic forward movement to catch it, lost his balance, and went splashing down into the dark waters.

"Pull, pull!" the man who fired had exclaimed in low, anxious tones.

Unwittingly these men had struck Brady in his weakest spot, but not with the bullet. The detective could not swim, and even for a man who could, to suddenly drop into the East river in the month of February was no joke. Brady now forgot all else in the one overpowering thought—how to save his life.

Of course he sank, but he immediately rose again. He had been in the water many times before. Experience had taught its lesson, and throwing himself upon his back, the detective lay as still as possible. Even in that mo-

ment of danger he had calculated the chances, and he knew that if he could only keep still two minutes the outgoing tide must take him against a small float which was bobbing up and down at the lower corner of the pier.

He put out his hand and clutched desperately at the float—gained a hold.

No cry, no shouting for help; he felt that it was not necessary. He had confidence in himself, and Brady crawled up upon the float with a sigh of intense relief. He looked for the boat. By straining his sight he cou'd just catch a glimpse of it moving up the river, far beyond his reach.

"I've gained what I wanted, though," he muttered. "The existence of the secret passage is demonstrated. Queer work is being carried on in that house—but by whom?"

He was positive that he had identified Dalton and very certain that the other person beneath the tarpaulin was Miss Mayhew.

"Probably they are dead," he reflected. "Really, this is a terrible affair altogether. I must hurry back to the Mayhew mansion and get dry clothes, if I have to steal them. The whole detective force shall be made to help me, if necessary, but I will find out what has become of that unfortunate pair."

When he reached the house with thirty steps he was chilled to the bone and really began to feel quite alarmed about himself. But even now he was forced to think of something else. He found that out as soon as he rang the bell, for instead of Dr. Letheridge, a stranger appeared in answer. A short, heavily built young man of some twenty-two or twenty-three years, well dressed, with a dark, sinister face.

"What's wanted?" he demanded gruffly, surveying the detective's dripping form in a manner that was anything but reassuring.

"Dr. Letheridge—I left him here a few moments ago. I am Detective Brady. The house is in my charge."

The look of inquiry gave place to one of determination.

"I am Howard Malcolm," the young man said slowly. "Dr. Letheridge has gone home. As for your services, my good sir, they are no longer required. There has been a death in this house. I prefer to be alone."

Whereupon the young man slammed the door in Brady's face. For a moment the old detective remained standing upon the thirtieth step gazing at the door.

"How I would like to break in and arrest that man," he muttered. "Something seems to tell me that I ought to do so, but good judgment, on the other hand, says no. My services no longer required, eh? Well, Howard Malcolm, for once I shall bestow them gratis, and I rather think that in the course of my investigation into the mystery that seems to surround this house we shall meet again."

He turned hurriedly down the steps, and in a moment had gained the doctor's door. A light burned behind the drawn window curtains, and in response to Brady's knock the door was promptly opened.

"Mr. Brady!" exclaimed the doctor. "Why, man, what in the world is the meaning of this?"

"I've been in the water, doctor."

"In the water? I should say you had! You are shivering frightfully. Pneumonia, pleurisy, chills, fever, lumbago, rheumatism. Not a word, old man, not a word. Strip off your clothes."

"But——"

"No buts. Off with them. Here you are, whisky—drink it. Towel? Here it is. Rub yourself for all you're worth. Dry clothes—you shall have them in a jiffy. You must not think of leaving this place to-night." Thus said the doctor as he went flying about the shop.

But Brady did not remain in Dr. Letheridge's store all night. By half-past two he was back at the Central Office. By three detectives had been started out to trace the movements of that mysterious boat.

Not a word, though, did Brady breathe to any one save Dr. Letheridge concerning the underground passage.

"I'll give a thousand dollars for the arrest of the man who personated me this night," the doctor had said.

"And I shall claim that money, doctor," replied Brady confidently. "Mark my words."

The next evening, just after sundown, a rowboat containing two men might have been seen pulling about at the foot of Peck Slip.

They were Dan Brady and Dr. Letheridge.

The sailors on the fishing craft lying in the wide slip wondered what they were about, and their curiosity was still further excited by seeing the boat suddenly disappear beneath the wharf. It was some time before it came out again.

Pulling around to the place from whence they started, the two men left the boat.

"Stranger and stranger," remarked Dr. Letheridge, as they walked up Peck Slip.

"Is it not?" replied Brady. "We did not succeed in finding a trace of it. Yet the passage must be there."

When they passed the house with thirty steps there was crape on the door, and an undertaker's wagon was standing at the curb.

"Has the post mortem been held?" asked the doctor. "After my summary dismissal last night I haven't cared to call again."

"I understand that it will be held to-morrow."

The next day Brady came bursting into Dr. Letheridge's store at a little after twelve o'clock.

"Why, they tell me the funeral has been already held next-door!" he exclaimed; "that it left the house an hour ago."

"That's so," replied the doctor.

"Were you present?"

"Oh, no, I was not asked."

"Who gave the certificate?"

"I questioned the undertaker and he said it was signed by a Dr. Bradish, and the cause of death stated as heart disease."

"Who is this Dr. Bradish?"

"A rascally, drunken scoundrel. He has no office except in his hat. His license should have been taken from him years ago."

These men are certainly carrying things with a high hand."

"They are. Any news of Miss Mayhew or the detective?"

"None. My assistants have attempted in every way possible to trace the movements of that boat, but have lamentably failed."

"What do you propose to do?"

"Let me ask you a question. Where is Horace Stearns to be buried?"

"In an old cemetery called the 'Cedars' at Morrisania. It is there that the Mayhews have their lot."

"Now I'll answer yours," replied Brady. "I am going to proceed at once to the 'Cedars'. Good-day, doctor. By to-morrow I hope to have something to report."

Leaving Dr. Letheridge's little shop, the detective turned his back squarely upon the house with thirty steps, and hurried off through the "Swamp" in the direction of the City Hall.

CHAPTER EIGHT

READY TO GO TO WORK

WHEN Richard, running confidently down-stairs to admit Miss Mayhew, reached the door, he lost no time in opening it, but to his utter surprise there was no one on the steps.

He could scarcely believe it. The automobile, moreover, was gone too. It was just as if the whole thing had been but a hallucination.

He stepped out and gazed up the street, and then down, but could discover no one, and he was just about to return and hurry back to Brady, when something suddenly dropped over his head—a bag it seemed to be—and a string was drawn tight about his throat.

He uttered a faint cry which was quickly checked by a stunning blow upon the back of the head. Strong hands had him—powerful arms were dragging him—there was a strange and sickly odor in the bag—his senses were leaving him—a second more and they were gone.

And Dalton knew nothing until he found himself coming back to his senses in the most singular situation he had ever found himself since his recollection began.

He was lying upon the floor of a narrow room but little bigger than a closet. Above him were cobwebby rafters, on all four sides brick walls. All this he could distinguish by the aid of a small lantern which stood burning upon the floor, its light showing him also two men wearing big ulster coats with high collars and soft, slouch hats, conversing together in one corner in scarcely audible tones.

"Will he never come?" the officer heard one say as he lay there listening, for let it be understood that he could do nothing else but lay and listen then.

His legs were tied and his arms were tied, and a thick wad of cloth in his mouth which almost choked him would not have permitted him to speak had he tried.

"He ought to be here soon," he heard the second man respond. "He would insist upon carrying the girl down to the boat himself, he is so afraid that some harm may come to her."

"He's a cussed crank anyway."

"Yes, but he pays big."

"All the same he's a fool. Why did he want to bother with that fly cop anyhow? It only makes us double work. He needn't have touched him at all."

"Why, don't you know?"

"No."

"First, he saw something to-night. He would make a dangerous witness."

"I understand. The other reason?"

"I don't know that I ought to give away secrets, but, while you went down to get the boat ready, I searched this young fellow's pockets and found something which opened my eyes."

"What was it?"

"It was a letter from an aunt making allusion to his dead father and his mother. I tell you it is just necessary for us to get rid of this guy."

"Still I am in the dark."

"That's because you don't understand the plot of this little play we are acting."

"No; but I'm expecting to act my part all the same."

"Of course; and you'll draw your money all the same when the play is played. Great ghosts! the drug has failed; the copper is awake. I'll have to dose him again. Here, doctor, you attend to that."

"Doctor. Not Dr. Letheridge?"

Thus wondered Dick when he saw the man suddenly turn upon him, drawing a bottle from his pocket and hastily removing the cork. No, it was not Dr. Letheridge. It was a man of about his height and general build who strongly resembled him in some few particulars, but it was not the doctor; his face, moreover, was clean shaved. He came close to Richard and bent over him.

In helpless terror the detective peered beneath the projecting hat, but he could not make a move to prevent what he knew must surely come. And it came. Without speaking the man thrust the open bottle beneath his nostrils.

The stuff in the bottle had but little odor, and what there was had nothing unpleasant about it. Still it did not resemble the odor of the stuff which Richard believed to have caused the death of Horace Stearns. A dreamy sense of languor seemed to creep over him. He knew that his senses were leaving him, and he tried to hold back, but it was of no use.

"I won't give in to it," he thought. "I won't! I won't!"

Then it seemed to him that he had just dropped off into unconsciousness for an instant, coming back to his senses again. He was just trying to open his eyes, when all at once he felt himself flying through space. Now the eyes came open of themselves. What magic had been at work? The scene had totally changed. The men, the room, the lantern—all had vanished. In their place was sky, the stars—for it was night—and, the dark water directly below.

With a splash it closed over him. A powerful current seized the officer and whirled him away. Then all seemed desperate, despairing.

It was the same current, however, which in all human probability saved Dalton's life.

It carried him away from a small schooner over the side of which two men were bending, peering into the darkness, whirling him into the gloom and out of view. Again it roused him as nothing else could have aroused him. Even a kitten with its eyes shut will swim if thrown into the water. Dalton was a splendid swimmer, and as if by instinct, he, like the kitten, immediately struck out and began swimming with the tide, although his brain was too much confused even to think, or to wonder how he came to be in the water, why his hands and feet were free, why since they were free that dreadful gag was still in his mouth.

But the power of thought came soon and he turned on his back and pulled out the gag. He saw that he was being swept up into a narrow creek, whose banks were lined with bushes and thick clumps of tall, dead rushes. There was a hut standing on the bank, too, and a light burned dimly in the window. Comprehending all these things, Dalton made for the shore and crawled out among the bushes where for some little time he lay shivering, wholly unable to move.

Again something happened to arouse him. A little way down the creek the sound of oars was heard. Presently a boat appeared, pulled by the two men whom he had seen in the underground vault. They drew in alongside of the hut, one leaping out and making fast, the other lifting in his arms a form in woman's clothes.

"So far so good, Doc," he heard the latter exclaim. "The boy has gone and we've got the girl just where we want her. This job has been a complete success."

Together the precious pair moved on toward the hut.

Dick was roused to action at last.

"You fools!" he muttered, staggering to his feet. "This is my chance to show what sort of stuff I'm made of. I'll prove to Dan Brady that I can put in just as sharp work as any detective on the force!"

CHAPTER NINE

IN THE CEMETERY OF THE CEDARS

A DECLINING sun, a raw, chilling atmosphere, a thickly clouded sky, with strong indications of a fall of snow. Over a frozen country road two men were driving in a covered Ford alongside a high wall backed with a row of elderly cedars, which stood in single file with their branches projecting above the coping like a militia regiment presenting arms on a dress parade.

These two men were Brady and a young doctor attached to the staff of the ——— Hospital. It will be seen presently why we cannot give his name or the name of the institution, but we will, for convenience sake, call him Dr. Strang. As they reached the broad gateway of the cemetery, the sun went down in a blaze of purple and gold, but the gathering clouds, closing in upon its last rays, brought darkness within ten minutes time.

Now the Cemetery of the Cedars has long since been removed. It lay in the Morrisania shore of the Sound, some two or three miles north of Harlem bridge. This location may be considered lightly indefinite, but it is the closest we can give.

As the touring car reached the gate it stopped, and Brady leaping out, hurried in the office of the burial ground, leaving Dr. Strang to light a fresh cigar and look out for the machine.

Before the detective returned darkness had settled over the scene and the snowflakes began to gather upon the car in that noiseless, steadily persistent way which always accompanies a windless storm.

Presently Detective Brady appeared and stepped up to the flivver, looking narrowly up and down the road as he did so. There was not a soul in sight.

"It's all right, doctor," he whispered. "The money did it as I supposed it would. He is going to open the gate for us; you drive right in."

Soon the gate creaked and swung inward. Behind it a man appeared, carrying a lighted lantern in his hand. Brady walked through beside the car, and the gate was closed.

"Where can we put the machine?" inquired the doctor.

"We will take it with us," replied the man with the lantern. "We can drive almost to the Mayhew lot, and I rather think we will need the flivver before we get through."

"Of coulse," put in Brady. "We've got to come back here."

"Oh," said the doctor. "I didn't understand that."

The three men then got themselves into the car and the doctor drove slowly along the broad avenue between the tombstones up the hill.

"It is as much as my position as keeper of the cemetery is worth to do this thing, gentlemen," said the man with the lantern, doubtfully. "For any one but you, Mr. Brady, I wouldn't think of it for a moment. I hope, in case of any trouble, you will see me through."

"You may be very sure of it," replied the detective. "Moreover, no trouble can possibly come."

"I wish I could feel sure of that."

"You may, then. I give you my assurance. I am acting under the direction of the police inspector of New York. What more can you possibly want?"

"Nothing, I suppose, but the order should have come through the trustees of the cemetery."

"It was quite impossible. This thing has got to be done at once if at all. There is no time to consult the trustees."

"How long will it take, doctor?" asked the keeper, in a tone which showed that his mind had by no means been set at ease."

"Not over half an hour."

"It will have to be done in my office. There is no other private place."

"Very good. It will leave no tell-tale traces behind."

"I hope not. You had better move faster. This snow is getting serious; it may interfere with our plans."

"Are we going right?" asked Brady.

"So far. I will tell you when to turn."

They continued on beneath the shadowing cedars which lined the road, their surroundings growing even more gloomy as they advanced.

Since by some means not clearly shown Howard Malcolm, the present occupant of the house with the thirty steps, had contrived to evade the law and have the body of his cousin buried without a post-mortem examination, Brady proposed to have one made on his own account.

He was not acting under the direction of the inspector. To have consulted him would have been quite useless.

"What time did the burial take place?" asked Brady, as they turned into a narrow avenue on their left.

"About half-past three," replied the keeper.

"Was it largely attended?"

"On the contrary, it was scarcely attended at all. There was only one carriage, and in that only one man."

"A short, stout individual with black hair and eyes."

"Yes."

"Howard Malcolm," thought the detective, but he said nothing, and after an advance of a few rods further by the direction of the keeper the flivver came to a halt.

"We shall be obliged to walk the rest of the way," he said.

Brady leaped from the car, the keeper and Dr. Strang following. Their way now led along a narrow path between the lots; at length the keeper called a halt in front of the iron door of a tomb built in the side of a little ridge. Even in the dim light Brady could descry the name Mayhew, cut in the granite which formed the center of the arch.

"This is the place, I suppose?" he said.

"Yes, this is the place."

"Have you got the key?"

"Oh, yes; I have the key. Gracious! Do you know I kinder hate to open that door."

"Nonsense! You ought not to be afraid."

"All the same I don't like it. Living among the dead don't make a fellow used to it, not by a good deal. What was that?"

A curious moaning sound had suddenly made itself heard at the top of the ridge.

"Pshaw! it's only the rising wind sighing among the tree-tops," cried the doctor. "Let us make haste. I want to get home some time to-night."

They hastened. The moaning sound, however, was not heard again.

"Who'll take the body out of the coffin, gentlemen?" asked the keeper. "I swear I won't. You can't make a resurrectionist out of me."

"Don't trouble yourself. Brady and I will attend to that. Open the door."

Producing a heavy iron key, the keeper proceeded to obey. Now the door swung inward, revealing the usual vault interior with its niches, its coffins, and the ever-present odor of decay.

"Which one is it?" asked Brady.

"This," replied the keeper, flashing his lantern upon a handsome rosewood casket which rested in the niche furthest from the door.

"Help me, doctor."

"Ye gods, but that's heavy," panted the doctor.

The words had scarcely escaped him when a loud noise was suddenly heard. It sounded just as though a heavy stone had fallen, but in what direction it was impossible for the detective to say. The sound, however, seemed to come from behind the coffins of the Mayhew family, which lined the side of the vault.

"Good heavens! what was that?" cried the keeper, in terror.

Scarcely less startled, Dan Brady and the doctor stood motionless, listening. Now all was still as death.

"I don't care what it is," cried the physician, boldly. "This body has got to come out. It ain't my first experience in this business, gentlemen. You stay here."

He hurried outside, returning presently with word that the coast seemed clear. Then he took from his pocket a small screwdriver, and partially unscrewed the lid of the casket, which upon being removed disclosed the face of a young man within.

"Hold up the lantern!" exclaimed Brady. "We'd better be sure than sorry."

"Oh, there's no doubt about it's being the right coffin," replied the keeper. "I helped put it in myself."

He, however, held the lantern in such a manner that the light struck full upon the face of the body in the coffin.

"Merciful powers!" exclaimed Brady, starting back. "Why, that is not Horace Stearns at all. It is Dalton—a young man who works for me!"

"But how can such a thing possibly be?"

"I've no time to waste in discussing the possibilities. I know it is."

"But what's to be done?" questioned the doctor. "I came here to dissect something, and I don't want to be cheated out of the chance. Of course we had better try it on this young man since you must be even more anxious to know the cause of his death than in the case of Horace Stearns."

"Know! I will know. It strikes me it might be just as well to make sure that he is actually dead before we begin to talk about cutting him up."

"Oh, he's dead fast enough," said the doctor confidently.

"Not a doubt of it," added the keeper. "It is only necessary to look at his face."

Indeed the face in the coffin could hardly be mistaken for that of a living man. It was as white as marble and as rigid. The eyes were closed and the lips set. Nevertheless Brady, remembering Richard's story of his experience in the house with thirty steps, resolved to make sure.

"We must have the rest of this lid off, doctor," he cried. "Here, give me your screw-driver."

"No, no! keep patient. I'll take it off," answered the doctor.

He went to work on the screws with a will, and presently had removed the lid entirely. Dalton's linen was now much soiled, and his clothes, usually neat and well brushed, were torn and bespattered with mud. The doctor now applied himself vigorously. Kneeling down beside the coffin, he tore aside the vest and coat, pressing his ear firmly against the heart. For several minutes he remained motionless and silent. Then, reaching out his hand, he grasped the cold right wrist and carefully felt the pulse.

"Well?" exclaimed Brady anxiously, when he at length arose.

There was a puzzled expression upon the doctor's face.

"I doubt his being dead," he said, emphatically. "There is a little pulse, and there is certainly a faint flutter of the heart, and I think I detect some slight lung action as well."

If it was so with Dick, might it not have been also so with Horace Stearns?

This was Brady's thought, and he stated it to Dr. Strang.

"It is entirely possible," replied the doctor.

"But," said Brady, "could Dr. Letheridge have been mistaken that night?"

"Easily. I should blame no one for being mistaken under these circumstances. Moreover, Dr. Letheridge is an old man and belongs to a past age in our profession. Again, at the time he made the examination of Mr. Stearns, he had been drinking, I think you said."

"He certainly had."

"Then his opinion goes for nothing."

"But he was not drunk."

"No matter; alcohol dulls the perceptions. Let a dozen doctors examine that young man now, and seven out of the twelve would pronounce him dead."

"But what can be done, doctor? I'll give you a thousand dollars if you can save his life."

"I shall do my best, Mr. Brady. The first thing is to get him to the keeper's house and into a warm bed. A galvanic battery would be of great service, but that, of course, is out of the question. Meanwhile I shall administer the antidote to hydrocyanic acid, which I believe to be the active principle of the poison employed."

"Is not that the same as prussic acid?"

"Yes."

"I have always understood that the fatal effect of prussic acid was instantaneous."

"Administered in its pure state, yes, combined with other ingredients, no."

"What do you think the combination is in this case?"

"It would take too long to explain, and at the best my explanation would be only theory. I must act at once."

Dr. Strang now produced a pocket medicine case and hastily examining its contents by the lantern's light, selected a small bottle containing a grayish powder.

Forcing open Richard's rigid jaws with a strong effort, he poured a portion of the powder into his mouth and watched the result. Immediately there followed a sharp contraction of the muscles of the throat.

"You see," cried the doctor, triumphantly, "he has swallowed it. The boy is certainly alive."

"And the danger?"

"Is half over now. Had the powder remained in the mouth I should have despaired. As it is, Mr. Brady, I fear it will be necessary for you to write that check."

"And I thank God for it," cried the detective. "Look here, can't we get the car nearer to the vault?"

"I think we might," replied the keeper.

Seizing the lantern, Brady now led the way out of the tomb, the cemetery keeper and Dr. Strang following. They found the Ford where they had left it and started back at once. The snow was still falling steadily, but as yet had not accumulated upon the ground sufficiently to interfere with their movements.

"I ought not to have come by this road, anyway," said the keeper. "There is another, but it is a long way around. You see, gentlemen, this is one of the oldest tombs in the country, and the ground has been all relaid out since it was built. However, we shall have no trouble in getting out. By removing a small piece of fence which is kept loose for that purpose we can drive across a private lot and gain the avenue. That is the way the funeral came in this afternoon."

"And the way we ought to have come," said Brady. "No matter, though. Let us make all haste. I am afraid it's going to be hard work to carry him as it is. Two of us will surely have to walk."

They entered the tomb, Brady, still clinging to the lantern, leading the way. He had scarcely crossed the thresh-

old, when the doctor, who was immediately behind, heard him sharply exclaim:

"Good heavens!"

"What now?" cried Dr. Strang, pushing in.

There lay the coffin upon the floor of the vault precisely as they had left it, but it was empty.

The body of Dalton had disappeared.

CHAPTER TEN

OVER THE GRAVEYARD WALL

IT is doubtful if any more gruesome situation can be conceived than for a man to be buried alive; to awake suddenly out of sleep and find oneself inclosed within the narrow limits of a coffin in the darkness and silence of the grave. Such was the situation of Dalton—at least in part. That he was spared the horror of the awful awakening does not make it any the less necessary that we shou'd now turn aside and explain how he and not Horace Stearns came to be in the coffin.

We left Richard standing upon the banks of the creek in his dripping clothes, filled with the resolve to do his best. Into the hut the two men had carried the girl and the door had been closed.

For several seconds Richard stood there inactive, revolving the situation in his mind.

Dick came to the conclusion that the girl was Miss Mayhew; that she had been attacked and drugged by the same men who had thrown the bag over his head as he stood upon the thirtieth step. Perhaps she was dead. Perhaps on the other hand she was under the influence of drugs. In either case something must be done at once.

Stealing forward, Dalton passed entirely around the hut, keeping a sharp lookout for dogs, trying to obtain a view of the interior by some means.

The light had been extinguished and heavy shades drawn down before each window. Inside the hut complete stillness reigned. It was in the midst of these investigations that a sharp chill seized the detective, followed immediately by a nausea. Fearing that he would attract attention if sickness followed, Richard stole away, moving toward a light which burned at some distance across the open lots behind the hut.

Long before he reached the light he was seized with stomach sickness. He was now seriously alarmed about himself, and pushing on as soon as he was able, at length reached a small house where his repeated knocking aroused an old woman, very deaf and at first very cross, but upon being persuaded to open the door at last, and seeing the sad condition of the detective, she softened toward him, took him into the house and made him up a bed on the floor, hanging his dripping garments before the stove to dry.

No doubt this was all that saved Dalton's life; for between the drug and his wet clothes his condition had been precarious to say the least. He never left that house until the next afternoon at about four o'clock, for the excellent reason that he was too sick to stand. The woman, though kind-hearted, proved very deaf and very stupid. Dalton tried every way in the world to make her comprehend that he wanted to send a telegram to Dan Brady or to get her to go to the police station for an officer, but she either could not or would not comprehend.

There was no one else in the house but themselves, and as the woman refused to leave it even to go after a doctor—Richard tried her on that, too—at last he gave it up and crawling out of bed himself drew on his clothes and started off.

It was running a great risk, but then something had to be done. Brady's assistant was very sick. In point of fact he was half beside himself with anxiety and pain. Every bone in his body ached fearfully. His head was swimming about so that he could scarcely see.

"I must have one look at the hut," thought he, "and then I'll get back to the city as quick as possible and tell Mr. Brady all about it. Oh, what a shame! What a shame! All this precious time lost! God help that poor girl. What has become of her since last night?"

He had gained some information from the old woman about the hut which was valuable. Its occupant was a singular old fellow named Marlow, a fisherman of peculiar habits, who lived entirely alone. If others had gone to his house carrying a prisoner with them, then that was Marlow's business, the woman had reasoned, and none of hers. Sick as he was the operative propcsed to make it his. When he reached the hut he found it silent and closed, the drawn curtains and the locked door being precisely as they had been when he left the place the previous night. Made bold through desperation, he was just about to lock the door when it was suddenly thrown open and a young woman of great beauty of the brunette type appeared before him on the threshold, starting back in evident terror when she saw that she had been discovered. Could this be the girl he had seen taken into the hut the night before? He stammered out something, he scarcely knew what.

"What do you want?" demanded the girl, hurrying out and closing the door behind her.

"I—I—you—that is—I thought——"

"Be quick; I have no time to waste here. If you want the owner of this place you will find him lying drunk inside there."

She turned and would have hurried away had not Richard prevented her.

"Are you Miss Mayhew?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, yes."

"My name is Dalton. I am assistant of Dan Brady, the detective.'"

The whole demeanor of the girl changed instantly. She burst into tears, but they were mere tears of joy.

"Oh, I'm so glad you have come!" she exclaimed. "How did you know? Why, they had me a prisoner here! I—I don't know how I came to be in this house. I don't know even where I am. Something dreadful, ain't it, sir? They attacked me on the steps of my own house. Oh! Can't you do something to punish these people? Who are they? What do they want? Dear me! I feel so shaken. The old man got intoxicated, you see, and I got the key away from him. The others will be here presently. I want to get away. I want to go now. Oh! Dear me, I guess I don't more than half know what I am talking about. Where is Mr. Brady? Please take me to him at once."

She talked so fast and seemed so much excited that Dalton found his head spinning like a top.

"Come, let us go," he exclaimed. "I will tell you all about it. Do you see that high stone wall over there across the lots? There must be a road alongside of it. Let us go in that direction."

And they went. But he was mistaken. No road ran alongside of the wall, which was in the rear of the cemetery of the Cedars. As they hurried toward it Richard told his story.

At the announcement of the death of Horace Stearns Miss Mayhew gave a great cry and almost fainted.

"Oh! Oh! Why did I leave him?" she wailed. "I only

went to spend the evening with a friend. If I had only known—if I had only known!"

"It's all a plot, miss!" cried Richard. "I'm sure Mr. Stearns was poisoned. I told you what I saw."

"Not a doubt of it. But by whom? Dr. Letheridge is a gentleman and an old friend of my uncle. It could not have been him."

"Can't you guess who it was?"

"No, no, no!"

"Then it is hardly fair to expect it of me. I can only tell you what I saw. What does it mean, anyway? Who are the men who attacked us both, who brought us to this place? What can their motive be, or rather, what can be the motive of the wretch who employs them?"

Miss Mayhew shuddered. From the expression which came over her face, the officer felt that she probably knew more about it all than she was willing to tell. At this moment they gained the wall.

"Bless me, this seems to be the wall around some graveyard!" exclaimed Dalton. "There is no road here."

"But it will lead us to a road, surely. There must be a gate."

"Shall we follow it?"

"Yes, yes; but not on the outside. Let us take the inside, and if these men should return to the hut they will be less likely to discover us."

"But you can never climb the wall, miss."

"With your help I can. I am not very heavy. Lift me up; once I am on the top I can easily jump down on the other side."

The officer did as requested. Without much difficulty he succeeded in getting Miss Mayhew upon the coping of the wall, for the excitement and necessity for exertion had given him new strength.

"Can you jump?" he called.

But Miss Mayhew made the leap, uttering as she did a piercing scream.

"None of that or I'll choke you, girl!" Richard heard a gruff voice suddenly exclaim. "Hold her, Doc! Hold her! How in the name of all that's mysterious did she come here?"

Dalton instantly came to the conclusion that the two men who had captured him at the house with thirty steps were on the other side of the wall. But be this as it might, the position of Miss Mayhew must surely be one of great peril. Something must be done to help her.

Dalton involuntarily thrust his hand behind him for the revolver which Dan Brady had given him. He did this although he knew that it had been taken away during the occurrences of the night before. Realizing that it was gone, he seized a heavy stone, and reaching up, laid it noiselessly on the top of the wall, then gave one leap, and clutching the coping, pulled himself up and seized the stone.

Just as he had expected, there was Miss Mayhew struggling in the grasp of two men. With all his force he flung the stone at the man nearest to him, and without stopping to calculate the consequences, leaped down, shouting to imaginary companions behind him to come on.

"Oh! Oh! Oh! My arm is broke!" roared the man, suddenly letting go his hold upon the struggling girl.

Freed, Miss Mayhew ran like a deer off among the bushes, and in a moment had disappeared from view.

Meanwhile Dalton had his hands full.

With a fearful imprecation the second man sprang upon him, and bore him to the earth.

"You spy! You will, will you!" he hissed. "Take that, and that, and that!"

He struck Richard with his clenched fist at each exclamation—he would have killed him had not his companion interfered.

"Stop, stop!" he whispered. "Do you want to spoil all? Leave him to me—you go after the girl."

"But there are others coming and you are wounded!" cried the fellow.

"No there ain't. That's all a fake, or they'd have been over the wall before now. Go, go! Don't waste time. If the girl escapes we're everlastingly dished."

That voice. Dalton knew it. The face was changed, but the voice and figure were the same. It was the mysterious doctor who had done the poisoning and no one else.

In vain Richard struggled.

The man was a perfect Hercules. His one arm—it was the right—seemed equal to Richard's two and more.

"You'll never trouble me again," he hissed, pulling a small bottle with a red label from his pocket and drawing the cork with his teeth, as he pinned Dalton to the ground with that iron arm.

His struggles were fruitless, his cries prevented by the grip upon his throat.

"No smelling this time," hissed the doctor. "You've got to take your medicine. Do you recognize this bottle? You've seen it before. There! Now the job is done and done effectually. You'll trouble me no more."

In spite of all that Richard could do, a portion of the contents of the phial had been forced down his throat. In a moment more he had ceased to struggle—almost to breathe. Still the man held him pinned to the earth. Still another moment passed, and Dalton, with marble features and closed eyes, lay as one dead.

"Was there ever such a mess?" muttered the man, rising at last. "He has given my arm a frightful twist, but I guess it's not broke. Now, then, what about Sam?"

He whistled softly. Presently an answering whistle was heard, and in a moment his companion came through the bushes with anything but a satisfied expression on his face.

"I can't find her anywhere," he growled. "What are we going to do about it?"

"Can't find her? You must find her."

"I'd like to see you do it then. I've looked everywhere. Have you settled with the detective?"

"Yes."

"What do you propose to do with him?"

The man leaned forward and whispered something in his companion's ear. The part of the cemetery in which this occurred was a lonely one and not yet laid out into lots. Night fell, it grew dark, it began to snow.

Just before Brady and Doctor Strang drove up, two men, carrying something heavy inclosed in a large bag, might have been seen hurrying along the footpath in the direction of the Mayhew tomb.

"It's a splendid idea, doc," said one of them.

"Hush! Not a whisper!" breathed the other.

He laid down his end of the bag as he spoke, and with the same hand—the left arm seemed injured—began fumbling in the pocket of his coat. Presently he produced a key and proceeded to open the door of the stone vault.

"We'll take Stearns' body out and clap this fellow inside the coffin in just about two shakes," he breathed. "Here, help me down with the thing, Sam."

It was the coffin that he referred to. They drew it from the niche together—the same coffin which Brady and Dr. Strang handled a little later on. Instead of meeting with the resistance they had expected the coffin came out with a rush, nearly sending the two resurrectionists down upon the floor of the vault.

"Great Scott! What's all this?" exclaimed the man addressed as Doc. "There's no body in here!"

Their amazement was complete. Producing a screwdriver, the man hastily removed the lip. Every screw was in its place. Nothing had been disturbed, but the body of Horace Stearns was gone.

"Euchred, by thunder! But by whom?" breathed Doc. "However, Sam, we don't want to stay fooling here. Every movement we make may be watched for all we know. Let's clap the cop in and screw her up. Git's the word then. By the living gods, if he don't pony up all the same we'll blow the whole biz out to the police!"

Three minutes later the men left the tomb together, locking the door behind them, then hurrying off among the graves. Doc carried the bag, but it was light now.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

CHASING GHOSTS AMONG THE GRAVES

THE snow storm still continued when Dan Brady and Dr. Strang took leave of Mr. Walsen, keeper of the Cemetery of the Cedars, at the main gate. They were in the Ford.

"Expect me to-morrow," said the detective. "This business must be examined into thoroughly. Bodies seem to jump in and out of their coffins in your cemetery, Mr. Walsen, after a fashion which is just a shade startling. In the interest of science I want to find out what it all means."

"And you may be sure that I want to find out the same thing, Mr. Brady. Is it necessary to say anything about the matter to the police as yet?"

"No. Not unless you choose to mention it."

"Oh, you may be very sure I won't mention it."

"Look for me to-morrow," repeated the old detective.

"Science!" muttered the doctor sneeringly, as the car rolled on alongside the cemetery wall. "Science has been nicely cheated to-night. Here I've driven all the way to Morrisania, and all in the interest of science. I came out to dissect one body and found another; even that one I've been swindled out of. Upon my word, Mr. Brady, it makes a fellow almost feel like dissecting you."

"You'll probably have a chance to try your hand on me if this road don't improve," growled the detective. "Another hole like that last we just went into and we'll find ourselves with broken necks as sure as fate."

"In which case I'm afraid we shall both be dissected by some one else. Guess I'll put my case of instruments on the seat here, so they'll find it handy by me. But look here, Mr. Brady, all joking aside, this is a singular mystery we've stumbled on to-night."

"The most singular I ever remember in all the years of my service as a detective."

"What do you make of it?"

"Doctor, I am utterly at loss to know what to make of it. We left that young man in the coffin—I will not say body, for you assure me that he was alive——"

"Oh, there's no doubt that he was alive."

"I say," continued the detective, without heeding the interruption, "we left that young man in the coffin for not over five minutes, and when we came back he had vanished. Could he have got out of himself and walked away?"

"Decidedly no."

"Then who took him out? Where did he go?"

"Question!" cried the doctor.

"What became of Horace Stearns' body?"

"Question again!"

"Then I have my theory. Horace Stearns' body was never put in that coffin. That officer of mine was buried in his stead."

But for once Dan Brady was entirely mistaken in his theorizing. Could he have looked into the coffin immediately after the funeral procession left the vault, he would have found Horace Stearns' body reposing quietly within. How then did the body of the poisoner's victim get out of the coffin? How was it that when the two men put Richard in they found the coffin empty, with the lid screwed down as solidly as when the undertaker completed his work? If Brady could have known all that the reader knows, he would have been more deeply puzzled still.

"And what about our search?" said the doctor. "We examined that tomb with the greatest care. We left no stone unturned to solve the mystery, and what did it amount to? Nothing—just nothing at all."

They had not yet passed the line of the cemetery wall, and even while the doctor was speaking, he allowed his eyes to wander toward it.

"Look! Look there!" he exclaimed suddenly. "In heaven's name, what is that?"

Dr. Strang stopped the car with an exclamation of surprise, which was mingled, however, with no trace of fear.

"Some one playing ghost," he whispered. "It is, as sure as you live!"

On the top of the wall stood a tall figure, robed from head to foot in white, the features concealed behind a thick white veil. As Brady and the doctor stared, it made a slight movement forward, as if it were about to leap into the road, then suddenly it seemed to vanish behind the wall, and was seen no more.

"We must look into this," cried the detective, leaping from the car. "Doctor, you wait for me here."

"Indeed and I shan't, then!" echoed the doctor. He leaped out also and followed Brady over the wall with an agility which showed that his limbs possessed all the suppleness of youth. When he struck the ground among the headstones he could not see the detective, although he could hear him crashing among the bushes on the left. Evidently Dan Brady had taken the wrong direction, though, for there on his right the doctor could see the shadowy form in white gliding away among the trees, its outlines mingling with the snow. Now Dr. Strang was a man to whom fear was but an unmeaning word. He at once gave chase and honestly expected to overtake the figure, but he counted without his host.

Right before him grew a thick clump of cedars, into which the ghostly form seemed to vanish.

But when the doctor reached the cedars it was not there, nor did a long and persistent search reveal anything to his anxious gaze.

Deeply puzzled, the doctor returned to the spot from which he had started, expecting to find Dan Brady.

Again he was disappointed, and when he scaled the wall and returned to the place where they had left the machine he was again disappointed in not finding him there.

But had Brady actually made a blunder?

Had the doctor known the shrewd old detective better, he would never for an instant have entertained such an idea. The truth was, that Brady, when he dropped to the ground behind the wall, saw standing before him in the path two figures, one in white, the other in dark clothing. Instantly they separated, one going to the right, the other to the left. Brady chose to follow the figure in black.

He had had some recent experience in white-robed ghosts

—experience which had been altogether unsatisfactory. Therefore, as a matter of choice, he selected the black one, and sprang after it along the path. It was a woman's; there was no doubt about that. He could see her dress, and distinguish something of her form as she fled before him along the path. Once or twice he thought he had lost her as the trees and bushes came between them, but each time she came into view again, running like a deer.

"She's got a good pair of legs, whoever she is," thought the officer, as he quickened his speed.

Soon he saw that he was gaining; then, after a moment, the woman's speed began to fail.

Now Brady was so close that he could hear her quick breathing. He sprang forward, put out his hand and tried to seize her, when suddenly the woman turned and would have struck him in the face if he had not caught her hand and warded off the blow.

"You shan't take me! You shan't! You shan't!" she panted. "I'll kill myself before I will become the wife of Howard Malcolm! Tell him that for me!"

"Miss Mayhew," said the detective, gently, while still holding her wrists with an iron grip. "Miss Mayhew, calm yourself. I am your friend. There is nothing to fear. I knew you from the first."

"You! Who are you?"

"Dan Brady."

The girl uttered a cry and fell at his feet.

Long and impatiently the doctor waited. Brady, however, did not return.

At the very moment when Dr. Strang was beginning to wonder if he had met with some accident, the detective, accompanied by the young woman whose capture he had effected, was hurrying along the path which led to the top of the bank in which was built the Mayhew tomb.

"This is the spot," whispered the girl. "You will find them both there, Mr. Brady. I thank God that I met you as I did."

She paused before a low iron door built in a depression hollowed out of the bank.

"Pull it right open," she whispered. "It is not locked."

The detective seized the knob and pulled the door open. A dark interior met his gaze, from which proceeded a moldy smell. Gliding through the doorway, Miss Mayhew called aloud:

"Horace, Horace, here is the detective! Help has come at last!"

There was no answer. Utter stillness reigned.

"Horace—Horace!" repeated the girl, in tones of alarm.

Just then the light of Brady's pocket flashlight shone through the door.

It showed them a small brick vault, whose position must have been directly behind that in which the Mayhew family had for years been buried.

The vault was empty.

"Gone—gone!" wailed the girl. "We have come too late!"

CHAPTER TWELVE

IN THE SECRET VAULT

FROM the moment when, forced to swallow a portion of the contents of the red-labeled phial, by Doc, down to the time Dr. Strang administered the antidote, Dalton never knew a thing.

It was just as Brady was leaving the vault to go after the car that consciousness returned to the unfortunate officer. His eyes opened, and he caught sight of the detective's retreating form. Horror unspeakable seized Richard.

What was this? A coffin—a vault—other coffins. Was he about to be buried alive? He little guessed that it had been done already. He had not seen Brady's face. He took him for Doc.

Thus, when a word or a sound might have changed everything, he kept silent. But silence was not to hold sway inside the vault for long.

He tried to rise, but discovered that he was too wretchedly weak to even drag himself out of the coffin. He grew mad with the horror of his situation all in an instant, and burst out with one wild, appealing cry. Seldom, very seldom, are our appeals for help in moments of extremity answered as promptly as was Dalton's then.

It seemed at that very instant as if he could hear a grinding noise behind him, and then all at once a voice whispered:

"Hush! Hush! They have gone. Don't do that again, and you shall be saved."

It was Miss Mayhew who bent over the coffin, and grasped Dalton by the hand.

"See!" she whispered. "It is me! You tried to help me to-night, and this is the result. Now I'm going to save you. Have you strength enough to help yourself at all?"

He seemed to find it in her very voice.

He could have scarcely told how he managed it, but he gained his feet somehow, and the next moment was following the girl through a narrow opening in the back of the vault, made by the turning inward of one particularly large stone.

"See," she whispered. "This is what saved us. My uncle was terribly afraid of being buried alive. He had this constructed purposely so as to give him a chance for escape in case such a thing were to happen. Oh, if he had only known!"

"Wha—what?" gasped Richard tottering at her side like a drunken person.

"No matter. You are too weak to talk. Who were those men who pulled out the coffin?"

"I—I don't know. The same that attacked you, were they not?"

"I did not see them—I only heard the sound of their voices; whether they were friends or foes I cannot say. Stand aside, please, I want to push the stone into its place before they are back again. It will not do to trust any one in this dreadful place."

During all this Miss Mayhew had carried in her hand a small lantern which sent out an uncertain light. Now as the stone moved forward Dalton looked about, and to his utter astonishment beheld a young man half reclining upon the brick floor of the narrow vault into which he had so strangely come.

"Horace Stearns?" gasped Dalton. "It can't be Horace Stearns!"

The figure on the floor did not move, but the eyes turned and stared at him in a helpless sort of way.

"Yes—I—am—Horace—Stearns—or—rather—I—was," he said slowly. "Who—are—you? Another—devil—come—to—mock—me?"

"No, no, dear!" breathed Miss Mayhew, hurrying to his side. "He is a friend. He has suffered just as you have suffered. Don't you remember? We heard the noise—I went to look. They had him in your coffin, Horace dear."

The excitement of his strange discovery did much toward restoring Dalton to his former self.

Horace Stearns alive!

Well, after that he could believe anything—or rather it so confused his understanding that he did not know what to believe. Just then the sound of footsteps and loud exclamations were heard in the vault beyond the secret door. It was a pity that, owing to the confused state in which he found himself, he did not recognize Brady's voice. If he had but done this much trouble might have been saved.

"Hush! They are there! Don't make a sound!" whispered the girl, holding up her finger warningly. For a long time they waited in silence. At last the confused sounds in and about the vault died away, and they could hear the car which had been brought to the spot drive off among the graves.

"Now is our time!" breathed Miss Mayhew. "Horace dear, can you walk?"

"No, Mary."

"Try, dear! Try to rise."

The effort was made, but it was of no avail.

"Where — where — is — that — woman?" asked Horace, dreamily.

"She is gone. She went for help, but she will not find it, poor thing."

"No—I'm—afraid—not. She—is—crazy."

"As I shall be soon if something is not done!" burst out the girl. "I must go. I must try to find the cemetery gate."

"Let me go. I'm feeling quite strong now," said Dalton. "What we want is to get him into a warm place. See, he is as white as death still. How did it all happen? How is it that——"

"No, no; you stay with him," interrupted the girl. "I will go. When I return all shall be explained. Stay and guard him, mister—I ought to know your name."

"My name is Dalton."

There was no mistaking the amazement Miss Mayhew felt.

"Where do you come from?" she inquired, eagerly.

"From New York. You remember I told you that I was Dan Brady's assistant."

"No, no. I don't mean that. Your parents—where were you born?"

"I was born in Boston, I believe. My parents died when I was very young. I don't remember them at all."

"But your mother—what was her name before she married your father?"

"I never heard."

"Take this and keep it carefully," said Miss Mayhew hastily drawing a folded paper from her pocket. "Whatever happens, don't lose it. When we have taken Horace to a place of safety I will explain."

She now opened the iron door and hurriedly left the secret vault. Time passed. Horace Stearns upon the floor seemed to drop into a troubled sleep.

Richard seated himself beside him watching his face curiously. After all that had happened it seemed so strange, so marvelous that this man should be still alive!

Now, suddenly the sound of approaching footsteps were heard, hushed when they reached the iron door.

Dalton jumped up and flung the door open fully, expecting to see Miss Mayhew standing before him.

Instead there were two men wearing long ulsters and low slouch hats.

"Ah, I thought so!" breathed the voice of "Doc" as Dick started back, just in time to avoid coming in actual contact with the cold muzzle of a revolver which was unceremoniously thrust in his face.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE CLOSET DOOR

ANOTHER day had passed and night had come again. It was clear and cold. The frozen snow upon the sidewalk creaked sharply beneath Dan Brady's boot heels as he approached the house with thirty steps. Shortly after the illuminated clock in the City Hall marked the hour of ten.

Complete darkness enshrouded the house. Every curtain was tightly drawn, the outside blinds were closed. Mystery there might be behind them, but it was effectually concealed from the outward eye.

Evidently, Brady was in good humor, for he smiled sarcastically as he passed the house.

"I shall be ready for you soon, Brother Malcolm," he muttered. "The net is closing around you. But a few short hours now, and I shall be able to pull the string."

As Brady passed the barber's shop and costumer's emporium of Samson Smart he gazed up at it curiously.

"Originally it was all one house," he muttered. "Our friend closes early. Now for the doctor! I'll wager I'll find him in the ginmill."

And he did. Although deeply engrossed in a game of poker, Dr. Letheridge waited only to finish the hand, and then dropping his cards, accompanied Dan Brady to his office across the street.

"What news?" he asked as soon as they found themselves seated by the glowing stove over their cigars.

"Lots of it, doctor. You know what I told you this morning about my adventures last night in the Cemetery of the Cedars?"

"Yes, yes."

"Since then I have learned that Howard Malcolm has presented for probate a document purporting to be his uncle's last will."

"Forged, of course," said Dr. Letheridge.

"On the contrary it is genuine."

"And the property?"

"All goes to Mary Mayhew."

"Now we understand why Malcolm was so anxious to marry the girl; why he wanted to get Horace out of the way."

"Now we understand that part. But query: is this actually Timothy Mayhew's last will?"

"I thought you just said that it was?"

"I said that it was genuine. May there not be another?"

"Well, there might."

"What was the date of the will you witnessed for Mr. Mayhew?"

Dr. Letheridge named a date.

"Very good," said the detective. "The will filed to-day bears a date two years earlier than the one you name."

"Then, by George, there is another will!" cried the doctor.

"It would seem so."

"What does Miss Mayhew think?"

"She is sure that there is a later one. Did Mr. Mayhew explain the contents of the will you signed?"

"Never a word, Brady. By the way, any news of Stearns and the young detective?"

"Unfortunately no. The cemetery and the old hut by the creek have both been searched in vain. It is this which makes me sad. Poor fellow! If I had only been shrewder and had suspected the existence of that secret vault. I fear they have met their fate."

"We mustn't give up till the last gasp, Brady. Is that all?"

"About all."

"Where is Miss Mayhew?"

"At my house. She is in a sad condition from nervous prostration."

There was something about Brady's face which made Dr. Letheridge inwardly decide that the detective had not told him all.

"And what, may I ask, have you accomplished?" inquired Brady.

"Much," replied the doctor. "Listen. I have opened that old door leading from my bedroom into Smart's place."

"Ah!"

"Yes. You know that my house and the one Smart occupies were originally a part of the Mayhew mansion."

"Yes, yes. So you told me."

"Brady, I found the door had recently been opened. There is no doubt in my mind now that young Dalton told the truth."

"And was actually attacked in your bed-room up-stairs?"

"Yes. Then he was carried through Smart's, and by some secret door into the house with thirty steps."

"By way of the closet, perhaps?"

"Perhaps."

"But by whom?"

"Ah! There is the question."

"Doctor, what sort of a person is your neighbor, Mr. Smart?"

"Faith, and you have me there. I don't know. He has only been here a few years. I never shaved in his shop in my life. He is a hard drinker and always in debt. That is all I know, except——"

"Except what, doctor?"

"Except the fact that Dr. Bradish used to shave with him as long as he continued to have the means to get shaved at all. You know my theory, Brady."

"That Dr. Bradish is the man who personated you that night."

"I am sure of it. The resemblance between us is marked, and has often been commented upon. He's a bad egg, and wouldn't hesitate for a moment to engage in any dirty scheme."

"But the risk?"

"Bah! What risk? Can you find him, Brady?"

"I confess, doctor, that all my efforts to find that man have been in vain."

"There you are. He will never be seen again. Have you seen Smart?"

"I have been to his shop a dozen times. He is never in."

"And the missus?"

"Mrs. Smart, they all tell me, is an invalid and cannot be seen."

"She's mad—that's what's the matter with her, Brady. But come, the time has arrived. Let us go up-stairs."

Evidently there had been some previous arrangement here, for Dr. Letheridge seemed to know precisely what he was about. Extinguishing the light and making sure that the outer door was fastened, the doctor led the way up-stairs, pausing before a door set in the wall between his own premises and those of the barber costumer, Samson Smart.

"Here's the key I have made," he whispered. "Let's listen."

They pressed their ears against the crack, but could distinguish no sound.

"Pity," said the doctor, "that Miss Mayhew will not divulge the name of her ghostly companion in the cemetery."

"But she will not," replied Brady. "She says she has sworn not to do so, and no persuasion on my part seems sufficient to induce her to change her mind."

"Still it's a pity. It might give us the very clew we want."

"She must be made to tell if worse comes to worse," said Brady decidedly. "But come, doctor, the coast seems clear. You had better open the door."

Dr. Letheridge did so cautiously.

Peering through the opening Detective Brady could see into a large, square room, around which ran a show-case filled with theatrical costumes; scattered about also were masks, wigs and false beards.

"You see," whispered the doctor, "the fellow had every opportunity to disguise himself since he had free admission to this place."

"I should say so. Now, doctor, to the other wall. This room is evidently deserted. I want to find the point immediately behind the closet, if I can."

"Why, it must be there," said the doctor, pointing.

"So I think. You refer to that closet door over in the corner?"

"Yes."

They crossed the room together, but the closet door was firmly locked.

"I'll soon fix this," said Brady, producing a bunch of odd-looking keys.

He had shot the bolt in a moment, and seizing the knob, flung open the door. Flashing his lantern in, he beheld several shelves, upon which a great number of little bottles were arranged. It was precisely as Dalton had described the closet in the house with thirty steps.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

SAMSON SMART

IF Dan Brady had only paid his visit to Pearl street a little earlier that evening he might have been rewarded by seeing the big front door of the house with thirty steps open, and a correctly dressed gentleman walk out.

He was young, a little inclined to stoutness, and, but for a certain shiftiness of the eyes, was possessed of a face which might almost have been termed handsome.

A pair of patent leather shoes scarcely discernible beneath the wide cut, check trousers; a long-tailed overcoat and a high, shiny tile of a fashion that now would not be tolerated even in a St. Patrick's parade, completed his attire.

In addition he carried a black lacquered cane with an ivory top fashioned in the shape of a human leg. This he thrust beneath his arm, and lighting a cigar leisurely descended the thirty steps which led up to the entrance of the Mayhew mansion, and strolled along until he had reached the barber's shop, whose presiding genius was Mr. Samson Smart.

A jangling bell was attached to the door—another fashion of bygone times—and when this correctly attired individual raised the latch it set up a fearful clangor.

This seemed just as well, for there were no customers in the shop; every chair was empty, the place being deserted save for a tall, elderly woman, dressed in black, with snow-white hair, sad face, and wild eyes, ever blinking, who immediately rose and moved toward the inner door.

"Good-evening, aunt," said the caller.

The woman turned and for an instant fixed her eyes upon his face.

"It's never a good evening when you come," she said, shortly. "Sit down. I'll inform my husband that you are here."

"Still cranky," muttered the visitor—who was Howard Malcolm, the occupant of the house with thirty steps. "No matter, she has wit enough to hold her tongue anyway, and that's all I ask. Ha! Here comes Samson now."

Certainly Samson Smart was never cut out by nature to follow the tonsorial art.

He had a face strongly resembling a faded-out pickle—one of the salted two for a cent kind—marked with less expression than the face of the average wooden Indian, a perfectly bald head, and a fist which would have felled an ox.

"Hello!" he said, gruffly. "Is it you? Come up-stairs. Hold on a minute, though, till I shut the shop so that we need not run the risk of being disturbed."

He turned the key in the outer door, pulled down the curtains and shut off the gas, after which he led the way to the costumer's establishment on the floor above.

"Where's Aunt Jane?" asked Malcolm, looking about the room.

"I've sent her off to bed."

"Good! Are we alone?"

"All alone. The sewing girls and my salesmen left two hours ago. This place don't keep open after six o'clock, you know."

"I know nothing at all about your business and I care less," replied the master of the Mayhew mansion, in low, significant tones, "but this I do know, Uncle Samson, you and I have got to come to terms to-night, or before the sun rises to-morrow I'll blow this whole business to the police."

"Pish! Pshaw! Stuff! Rubbish!" cried Samson Smart, snapping his fingers contemptuously. "I'm too old a bird, Howard, to be scared by any such threat as that. You're as deep in the mud as I am in the mire. Try it on. That's all I've got to say."

"Have a care, Samson!"

"And you have a care, Malcolm. I've done nothing that the law can hold me on."

"You haven't? Then neither have I! I was in Chicago when the death of Timothy Mayhew took place. I've witnesses to prove it, too."

"And I have my little alibi all fixed up in splendid shape, so there we stand on the same ground. There's only one way in which you can deal with me, and that's cash down to-night. I've notified you, and I trust your good sense has shown you the necessity of paying up."

"How the mischief can I pay up when I've got nothing to pay with?"

"You stole ten thousand dollars in cash from your uncle's desk before you left for Chicago. I want my share of that."

The face of Howard grew livid.

"You are mad!" he gasped. "Stark, raving mad."

"On the contrary, my brain was never clearer than at the present moment. Come, my boy. You see I know all about your tricks."

"How much do you want?"

"Five thousand. Two thousand five hundred for Doc, the same for myself. As for the rest we'll wait until you marry Mollie and come into the estate."

"Then according to present appearances you'll wait a long time for the balance. You've made a nice botch of this business—where is Mollie? You admit you don't know. No, but I shall find her."

"That remains to be seen. Why didn't you hold on to the girl when you had her?"

"She escaped from the hut. It wasn't my fault."

"Yes it was."

"I say it wasn't. I've got something else to do beside perpetually standing guard over the girl. Put your mind at ease on that score. If you show that you mean to do the right thing she shall be found."

"What did you do with that boy—I mean Brady's assistant? Pitch him into the river as I directed?" asked Malcolm.

"Yes."

"Then everything is safe, but until Mollie is found and forced to marry me there is no certainty of my inheriting my uncle's estate. In case of her death the property all descends to the heirs of Horace, so I shall not pay a cent till the knot is spliced."

Samson Smart laughed disagreeably.

"Oh, yes, you will!" he exclaimed. "You haven't the faintest conception of the situation as it actually stands."

"What do you mean?"

"The heirs of Horace Stearns will never receive that money, Howard."

"They will if I don't marry Mollie."

"No they won't."

"Why not, when the will so directs?"

"What's to hinder Horace from getting the property himself?"

"Horace! How can a dead man inherit? You ought to understand why not if any man does."

Again the laugh.

"But Horace Stearns is not a dead man," said Smart, slowly.

Howard Malcolm dropped weak and nerveless into a chair.

"Horace—not—dead!" he gasped. "Why, man, I saw him buried with my own eyes."

"It makes no difference, Howard. Your cousin is not dead, but very much alive, and at the present moment within a stone's throw of where you sit. Now will you give me my share of the money you stole?"

"Prove your words!" hissed Malcolm. "Prove your words!"

"Oh, I can prove them. Besides, even if Horace is alive you stand no show for the estate."

"In heaven's name, man, what do you mean?"

"I mean simply that the will which you offered for probate to-day is not the last will of Timothy Mayhew, my late respected brother-in-law. That's all."

"You are lying!"

"I am not. See here, I have the document to prove it. This is the last will of your uncle. It is dated long after your document and bequeaths the entire property to another person entirely. Neither you, nor Horace, nor Mollie Mayhew come in for a cent!"

All the life seemed to have gone out of Howard Malcom's face as Smart drew from his pocket a folded document and held it aloft.

"Who is the person?" he gasped.

"No matter! Will you pay up? I want six thousand now."

"I haven't got it."

"I hold both the fortunate legatee under this will and Horace Stearns prisoners. To-night must settle it. Either you pay or they go free; the one to accuse you of plotting murder, the other to scoop in the estate. Will you pay up? My price is eight thousand now!"

"And if I do pay?"

"We shall finish them both up this very night."

"You shall have the money."

"When?"

"To-morrow. I have not got it by me."

"Give me your written promise."

Howard Malcolm moved to a desk which stood in one corner of the place and wrote.

"How will you do it?" he breathed. "Your confounded doses don't seem to work.

"No, by gracious they don't! The stuff was old and bad and had lost its life. I have some fresh mixed now. This time there'll be no doubt."

"When do you propose to do the job?"

"Now—at once. You shall go with me and see it done."

"Can't Doc do it?"

"Doc's drunk. I have him locked up where he can do no mischief. If we want to get a good crop, my dear nephew, we must even reap the field ourselves."

"But who is this person named in the last will, uncle? You have not told me that."

Samson Smart's face now assumed a curious expression.

"Why, the fact is he is my wife's son by her first marriage," he said; "consequently he is your cousin and the old man's nephew, since my wife was your mother's sister. I won't save him, though. I'm on the make. If he were my own son he should not stand in my way."

"But Aunt Jane?"

"Does not even suspect. She thinks him dead years ago. You see—sh—sh! What was that?"

It was a singular sound which at that instant made itself heard from a remote corner of the room, half cry, half moan.

"That devilish hag is spying again," hissed Samson.

He leaped up, and, rushing over to the opposite side of the room, began to beat about among the costumes which hung suspended to the wall, but if he really expected to find any one there he must have been grievously disappointed, for his efforts met with no success.

Howard Malcolm, who lent his assistance to the search, appeared to be seriously disturbed.

"I'll bet you what you like that it was Aunt Jane, and that she's heard all," he said, anxiously.

"It shan't do her any good then!" snapped Smart. "We'll have the whole business settled inside of half an hour. If she dares to make any trouble she shall have her dose out of the red-labeled bottle! How old Tim Mayhew would have opened his eyes if he could but have known that the sister he discarded twenty years ago because she deserted the child left her by her drunken brute of a husband and ran away with a barber, was living next-door to him. I fancy I can see his face as it would have appeared if any one had happened to tell him. But he died in blissful ignorance. Come, Howard, my boy, we must be off."

He moved toward a door in one corner and flung it open, revealing a closet with several shelves, upon which a number of small bottles were ranged.

"Put out the gas!" he whispered.

Howard Malcolm obeyed.

Stooping down, Smart touched some hidden spring close to the floor.

Immediately the whole row of shelves swung about in such a manner as to stand directly across the closet.

Now on one side were shelves with the bottles, on the other shelves with books.

Passing through the opening thus formed, the plotters found themselves standing in that upper chamber of the house with thirty steps, in which Dalton had caught the bogus Dr. Letheridge in the act of pouring poison into Horace Stearns' glass.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

EASY TO GET IN BUT HARD TO GET OUT.

WE left Dan Brady and Dr. Letheridge standing in front of the closet door in Smart's costume rooms, surveying the array of bottles upon the shelves.

"By George!" breathed the doctor, "I can scarcely believe it."

"What?"

"Those bottles. It shows that Richard Dalton's story was true to the letter."

"I was already satisfied of that. Doctor, we are on the verge of a big discovery."

"I'm sure of it."

"There's some secret spring here. Depend upon it the whole interior of that closet turns."

"Shouldn't wonder."

"I'm going to find that spring, doctor."

"And I'll bet ten dollars to a cent that you do."

The words were scarcely spoken when the bell in the doctor's office rang violently.

"Confound it all, there's a patient!" exclaimed the doctor. "I'll bet a hat I'm called to attend Mrs. Brown."

He was right. They retreated to the bedroom hastily, and when the doctor answered the bell, he found that the call was to this particular case which was one not to be refused.

"I've got to go," he said.

"Go," replied Brady; "it can't be helped."

"And you?"

"I shall continue our work alone."

The detective now returned to the closet, and finding the coast still clear, gave his whole mind to discovering the secret spring, of the existence of which he was now assured.

He soon found it, and the closet shelves swung inward, precisely as they had done for Howard Malcolm and Samson Smart an hour before.

Closing the closet door carefully, having first taken care to study the operation of the spring on the other side, Brady, flashing his lantern about him, found himself in the well-remembered chamber again.

What was to be done now!

Well satisfied that Howard Malcolm, if not actually the guilty party, was at the bottom of the whole business, the detective came to the conclusion that the safest way was to try a game of bluff.

Dalton was missing, Stearns was missing; Malcolm, he resolved, should explain what had occurred after Mary Mayhew left the tomb.

Of course Brady knew now that young Stearns was not dead, but he did not know by what means he had been rescued from the coffin and restored to life.

This was still a secret which Miss Mayhew refused to disclose.

"I'll burst in upon him suddenly," thought the detective, "and cover him with my revolver. If he shows fight I'll have to wing him. I think though I can draw the truth out of him without that."

But again Brady's calculations proved futile.

He searched the house from one end to the other, discovering that he was in full possession of the premises—alone.

"No matter," he murmured at last. "There's other work to do. Dr. Letheridge and I searched for the secret passage leading down to the river at one end. Now I'll search at the other. I've succeeded so well with the closet that this may prove to be one of my lucky nights all around."

And indeed it seemed as if the detective were right.

Satisfied that there was no one in the house, he opened the front door and stood in the vestibule. The outer doors were closed and this protected him from the observation of any curious passer-by.

To avoid sudden interruption in case Howard Malcolm should return and attempt to enter by his latch key, Brady shot the bolt and then set himself the task of solving the mystery of the thirtieth step which was inside the vestibule door.

Now he was no longer working in the dark. Miss Mayhew had told him how, as he stood on the thirtieth step and was about to enter the house, a man suddenly seized her and clapped a bag over her head just as had been done in the case of Dalton.

The girl was certain that after that she had not been taken into the house, but rather to one side, the right.

Consequently, Brady was not only pretty well informed as to what it was necessary for him to look for, but just where to look.

He struck the partition a resounding thump, the same hollow reverberation being returned.

"She's right," he muttered. "There's an opening here. This old house is as full of mystery as an egg is full of meat."

He now proceeded by the aid of his lantern to examine the side wall of the vestibule with extreme care. It was not long before he discovered that one particular flower in the vase of floral prodigies painted upon the wall presented a soiled and worn appearance. Examining it still further, he found also that it was raised above the even surface of the rest.

"Eureka!" breathed Brady. "There's no mistake about this."

He pressed the flower with all the force he could exert.

Immediately the whole vase moved inward, revealing an exceedingly narrow space behind from which ran a ladder down into the darkness below.

It was so narrow that Brady had to climb sideways as he descended.

As the operation of the spring was not visible on the inside of the secret door the detective took the precaution to leave it slightly ajar, and when he reached the bottom of the ladder he flashed his lantern about with more anxiety than he would have cared to admit. Was he going to find Dalton's dead body?

He feared so, then.

It was nothing but a small brick vault that he had entered, however. It was quite empty, but at one end was a door which stood slightly ajar.

Brady pushed on and found himself entering upon a narrow passage walled up on all sides with small Dutch bricks, which alone went to show that it must have been constructed more than a century before.

"At last," breathed the detective, with a sigh of satisfaction, "I am on the right track."

He crept along the passage, revolver in one hand, lantern in the other.

For a long distance he followed it. It seemed as though he must come to the river soon.

Suddenly he found his way blocked by a wooden wall filling the entire width of the passage. Here he listened, and it seemed to him that he could hear the low swash of the waves on the other side.

"This is the end," thought Brady. "I will return now, and come back later with a force sufficient to search this place in safety from end to end."

He now hurriedly retraced his steps and gained the brick vault once more.

Everything seemed precisely as he had left it, until he came to ascend the ladder.

Now to his horror he discovered that the secret door was closed.

He could not find the spring.

Try as he would it was not to be discovered.

"This is serious," thought the officer. "The strong draft must have blown it shut. I will hurry back through the passage and try to get out by the waterway."

He had just turned to descend the ladder when a slight noise at its foot attracted his attention.

Brady threw the light of his lantern downward.

It struck full upon two men who stood at the bottom of the ladder.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

PERILOUS POSITION OF BRADY.

FROM the peculiar position in which he stood the detective had a splendid chance to get at his revolver, and quick as a flash he had pulled it out of his back pocket.

Instantly the situation resolved itself into a question who should fire first.

A shot struck the lantern and dashed it from his hand, and all was profound darkness.

"I'm hit!" came a voice ringing up from below. "No, I ain't either. Blest if I didn't think I was."

Then for a moment silence followed, then a groan and more silence, which was not broken during many minutes.

Meanwhile, Brady remained clinging to the topmost rounds of the ladder, uncertain what to do.

In the brief glimpse afforded him of the men's faces he had recognized Howard Malcolm. His companion was Samson Smart, but this Brady did not know.

Of course the detective felt for the secret spring, but he failed to find it. To fire down into the darkness again was useless. Go on he could not. That was plain. Nothing, therefore, remained but to go back.

"Speak! I can see you! Speak or I fire!" called the detective, though in reality he could see nothing.

There was no answer.

Yet it seemed to Brady that he could hear some one breathing in the vault below him.

Fancy the courage therefore that it must have required for him to do what he did—deliberately go down that ladder into the vault.

But if it was courageous it was also foolhardy. Dan Brady was often that.

He fully expected a fight to follow, but he was hardly prepared for what actually did occur.

When his feet touched the floor of the vault all was still silent. The detective had his weapon ready, and had also provided himself with a parlor match, of which he always carried a good supply.

Suddenly he struck the match, the flame flaring up for an instant and lighting the narrow space of the vault from one end to the other.

The vault was empty save for himself.

"Gone!" breathed the detective. "Gone! It was that man Malcolm! I knew him instantly. What is to be done now?"

His eyes rested upon the door communicating with the secret passage and then he seemed to find his answer. Doubtless they were lurking behind it. Brady did not then believe that the man who cried out had been hit at all.

It would be useless to deny that the operative's pulse quickened—that his heart increased its beat.

Should he go forward or retreat?

He could not retreat—therefore go forward he must or remain where he was in a state of horrible suspense.

Hesitating no longer, Brady flung the door wide open, realizing too late the folly of the move.

Instantly two men leaped upon him out of the darkness—the match by this time had gone out—and bore the detective to the floor before he could raise a hand to prevent.

There was a brief struggle and a sharp one.

Its result was precisely what might have been anticipated.

In a few seconds the detective was overcome and disarmed.

Dan Brady was at the mercy of the plotters now.

"Hold him, uncle! Sit on him!" whispered the voice of Malcolm. "I'll do the tying."

Wherever he obtained it, he had a rope and a strong one. With wonderful dexterity he wound it about the detective's arms and legs, tying him securely, stilling his protests by a handkerchief, which he thrust into his mouth.

"He must be disposed of at once," he whispered. "For us there is no safety while he lives. What shall we do?"

"Shoot him," replied the voice of the other man.

"No, burn him. That would be too easy a death," answered the voice of Malcolm. "I'll tell you what, the tide has turned. Let's take him to the sub-cellar just as he is and leave him there with the outer door open. It will soon wash him away, his body will be found in the river, and all possibility of the job ever being brought home to us will be done away with. Come, what do you say?"

"An excellent plan, I say."

"Then here goes. You take his shoulders. I'll manage the legs."

They seized Brady, and together bore him along the secret passage, light being supplied by a lantern which Malcolm had already lighted, passing the ring over his arm.

When they reached the wooden partition they laid him down, and Malcolm, stooping down, ran his hand along its base.

Immediately the partition swung inward as on a hinge, and Brady was carried through.

Now the lantern showed the detective a damp, slimy cellar into which the pair carried him and laid him upon the floor.

"I'll open the door," said Smart.

He moved across the cellar and flung open a wide door beyond which was only darkness and the sound of swashing water.

"That's the talk," said Malcolm. "Now, my friend, you will have ample time afforded you to prepare yourself for the next world. In half an hour the tide will fill this cellar. You see how wide the door is. That it will carry your body with it in its retreat I need not remind you. You understand now how dangerous a thing it is to cross the path of a man like me."

They were gone.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

MATTERS MUCH MIXED ALL AROUND.

MATTERS to Howard Malcolm and "Uncle Samson" looked pretty satisfactory when they left the cellar and hurried away, retracing their steps along the secret passage.

It was time.

Thus far since they left Samson's place together matters and things had been anything but satisfactory for this precious pair.

"We've caught the detective, that's one sure thing," whispered Samson, "but I'll be blowed into everlasting atoms if I have the remotest idea what's become of them two boys."

"You are sure that you left them in the old sail loft above the restaurant? You are sure that it wasn't all your imagination, worked up to the point for the express purpose of getting that promise in writing to pay you eight thousand dollars out of me. You are sure of that, Uncle Sammy?"

"Now, say, Howard, you don't think I'd swindle you, my boy?"

"Don't think anything about it!" cried Malcolm. "There isn't time to think. See here, Uncle Samson, the case stands just like this: Horace is, in the eyes of the world, as a man dead and buried, and by the eternal gods! he mustn't come to life again. As for Brady's assistant, he must never escape to tell what he knows about Doc Bradish mixing up for Horace that little dose."

"Tut, tut! Don't breathe that, my boy. The very walls may have ears. Would we ever thought of finding Brady at the top of that ladder just now?"

"No more than I thought you were shot when you yelled out, Uncle Sammy. Well, I won't mention it, but look! You'd better produce your prisoners, if you want me to believe in them. Here you come to me with a cock-and-bull story, and when we go to the place where you claim to have them hidden, they are not to be found, nor can we find them, search as we will."

"Now look here, Howard, just so sure as the tide will float Dan Brady out of that cellar in half an hour, I did lock them two boys in the sail loft. It's run by a pertickeler friend of mine who happens out of town just at present, and he brung the key around to my shop and left it with me."

"I believe it's all a fake—all a put-up job to extort money from me, uncle, I do indeed," exclaimed Howard emphatically. "Where's this mysterious nephew you spoke of? Has he gone, too? Did you put him in the sail loft along with the others, or did you jam him up the chimney, or hide him in the restaurant range?"

"Say, Howard, don't you be a fool."

"You're the fool, Uncle Samson. You——"

"Hold on, my boy. You don't understand. I have an idea that Doc Bradish, drunk as he appeared to be when we tumbled him over up-stairs, really opened the door for them boys."

"I wouldn't be a bit surprised, but the third one—the heir—what of him?"

"Why, don't you understand?" repeated the barber. "May I never shave another beard if you ain't thick! Howard, there ain't no third one—there's only two."

"What! What do you mean, Horace?"

"Oh, bother!" cried Samson. "I refer to Richard Dalton. He's my wife's son, your cousin, old Tim Mayhew's nephew, in whose favor the latest will is drawn."

"I—I don't believe it."

"Then I'll prove it to you. See! Here's the will. You shall see for yourself."

As he spoke Samson Smart thrust his hand into the outside pocket of his short sack coat, quickly taking it out again with an exclamation of dismay.

"Great heavens!" he exclaimed; "I've lost the will! I put it in that pocket, and now 'tain't there."

"No!" echoed Malcolm.

"Yes!" roared Samson. "Doc must have snaked it out

of my pocket when I bent over him. Howard, this is serious. We must hurry back up-stairs."

Now, by "up-stairs" Smart meant up in the sail-loft on South street, which Dan Brady had observed as being in a line with the house with thirty steps, and beneath which they now stood.

It was to this place that Horace Stearns and Dalton had been conveyed after their capture in the secret compartment of the Mayhew vault at the cemetery of the Cedars, the details of which journey want of space compels us to omit.

To Richard it was like a nightmare, to Horace like a dream.

An overwhelming desire to sleep seemed to overpower the unfortunate young man. As for Richard, he was drugged again—but this time with no intent to kill—and knew but little of what happened, until he found himself lying a helpless prisoner in the sail-loft with Horace by his side.

He had not the faintest idea where he was, nor had Horace, who seemed to return to full consciousness at about the same time as Richard.

It was entirely dark; they were tied hand and foot with cloths bound tightly over their mouths.

Indeed at first neither was aware of the other's presence, and each for some time passed through a season of agonizing anxiety, for neither had the faintest notion where they were nor of the extent of time which had elapsed since they had been overpowered by the men and dragged from the vault.

Such was the situation of these two unhappy youngsters when all at once a sudden and unexpected change occurred.

While Richard, lying helpless upon an old sail, was trying for the hundredth time to work his hands free from the cords which held them, a door was suddenly flung open and the man who had personated Dr. Letheridge came staggering into the loft carrrying a lighted lamp in his hand.

"Hello! So you fellers have come to your senses at last!" he exclaimed, thickly. "Blamed rough on you, ain't it? How your bones must ache! How blamed sick your stomachs must feel. I swear I feel sorry for you, and I'm going to get you something to eat."

It was then that Richard became conscious for the first time of the presence of Horace beside him on the floor.

Recognizing the man at the first glance, he realized the seriousness of his situation, but of course he could not speak.

Now when whisky is in wit is out, the saying goes, and never was a truer word spoken.

The building was deserted. The restaurant sign which Brady had seen was only a sign, for the proprietor had abandoned his undertaking weeks before; thus the place was closed, and the keys left with the owner of the sail loft, who had passed them over to Samson Smart.

Now Smart, with a want of shrewdness, which certainly belied his name, had locked his drunken friend in the building with instructions for him to carefully guard the prisoners, just as though a drunken man could be careful about anything he undertook.

What was the result? Why, just this.

When Dr. Bradish had brought the food prepared for the prisoners, he removed the gags and untied the hands of each, and while they were eating went into the little office of the sail-loft for another pull at his bottle.

He took one pull and then, feeling that he had not had enough, presently took another.

After that Dr. Bradish completely forgot that he had any prisoners to look after.

He threw a shovelful of coal into the stove which kept the office warm, closed the door leading out into the passage, and staggering to an old lounge, stretched himself out at full length and went to sleep.

Meanwhile Richard and Horace were not only refreshing the inner man, but comparing notes and trying to comprehend the situation.

Both came to the conclusion that they were still prisoners somewhere in the vicinity of the cemetery of the Cedars, for neither had the slightest recollection of the long boat journey which they had taken in a state of unconsciousness between Morrisania and New York.

Neither could remember much after the time when the two men burst into the secret vault, but as may be easily imagined, both were very anxious to escape.

"What does it all mean?" asked Richard. "Who is at the bottom of it?"

"You are asking me too much," Horace had replied. "Mary thinks my Cousin Howard is, for she says he tried to force her to marry him, but as we have always been good friends, I can't help but think she must be mistaken. Uncle's will was not found, you see, and——"

"Hark! What's that?" whispered Dalton.

"It sounds like some one snoring," replied Horace.

"Can it be that man? He was very drunk. Look here, there's no trouble in shaking off these ropes. I'd have done it before, only for his revolver."

They did it now, though, and in a moment both stood free.

The snoring continued. Loud, deep, sonorous grunts reverberated through the loft.

"He's gone to sleep as sure as you live," whispered Richard.

"Then what's to hinder our trying to get out? Poor Mary! She must be almost mad with anxiety, or perhaps——"

"You mean perhaps they have captured Miss Mayhew, too," finished Richard, as he paused. "We won't talk about that. We'll get out if we can. If we only could communicate with Brady we might turn the tables on these fellows, whoever they are. That paper Miss Mayhew gave me——"

"Was found in my coffin under me!" breathed Horace.

"You don't mean it! Who put it there? Who rescued you? How is it that you are alive at all? I have been dying to get an answer to these questions ever since we began to talk."

A curious expression came over Horace Stearns' face.

"Have you ever heard of the ghost that haunts the Mayhew mansion?" he asked.

"Yes. Brady saw it."

"Well, then, Dalton—I only know what Cousin Mollie told me. She says it was the ghost who opened my coffin and took me out, that it was the ghost who administered the antidote to the poison I had taken, the ghost who put the will under me when I lay in the coffin. She claims to have met the ghost in the graveyard after she escaped the time you were attacked by the wall. That's all I know."

"And it leaves me as much in the dark as ever," said Richard. "But the paper you call a will—is it your uncle's will?"

"Yes. You have it?"

"Yes, certainly. No! By gracious! My pockets have been cleaned out! It is gone!"

"It can't be helped, and was to be expected. Let us make a move at once."

"But who is this ghost?"

"That I can't tell you now. Come, let us go."

They stole toward the door, and to their great joy found it open.

Passing down-stairs, groping their way, they had scarcely gained the landing below when voices were heard together with footsteps, and they knew that some one was coming up.

A light flashed, showing two men ascending the stairs just in time for them for a danger which certainly would have proved serious but for the warning thus received.

Now these men were Howard Malcolm and Samson Smart.

They remained in the building upward of an hour searching everywhere for their prisoners, railing against the wretched Doc and tumbling him about, without, however, succeeding in arousing him from his drunken sleep.

But they didn't find the young men.

Had they looked under some old bagging in a certain big box on the ground floor near the cellar stairs, they might have discovered them hiding, but they never thought of that, and this in spite of the fact that they stood leaning against it discussing the situation, when at length they came downstairs.

Then it was that Dalton did a bold thing.

Smart stood close to the box talking to Howard Malcolm, who was leaning against it.

Directly on a line with the barber's coat pocket was the lantern's light, striking upon the end of a folded paper protruding from it.

All this Richard's sharp eye saw through a hole in the side of the box.

When at length the two men moved down the cellar stairs, Richard held the paper and Samson's pocket nothing but emptiness.

"Bravely done! I wouldn't have dared to run my hand through that hole and take it out of his pocket," whispered Horace. "I'm perfectly sure it's the will."

"I hope it may be, if what you told me is true."

"I assure you that it is true."

"I can hardly believe it. What shall we do?"

"We've tried every door, they were all fastened. We can't break out above, suppose we follow the way they took and try it below?"

"All right. I'm with you."

"And I'll stick by you through thick and thin," said Horace.

"You know I'll do the same by you," answered Richard. "Come on!"

They now descended into the cellar, but all was silence and utter darkness. For a long time they continued to grope about seeking to discover the outlet by which the plotters had retreated.

It was quite useless.

Notwithstanding all their efforts they failed to discover it.

Yet Richard felt sure that it was in the floor and not in the side walls.

"Hark!" cried Horace, at length, speaking suddenly. "I hear something."

"What—where?" breathed Dalton.

"Over in that corner. Yes, I was right."

Not a doubt of it now.

Over in the corner to which Horace Stearns had pointed, just as though Richard could have seen the action, a light suddenly flashed, showing the boys a man's head with a sour, disgusted-looking countenance just coming up out of the floor.

"He's back after the will!" breathed Dalton. "There's going to be trouble now!"

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

CAUGHT AND CAGED

THE fact was the trap-door lay close to the front of the staircase leading up to the floor above, and to attempt to gain the stairs would have been mere folly, for following Samson's head came the barber's body, a pair of long legs and then another head.

This second head proved to be Howard Malcolm's, and then the trouble began.

Samson spied the young men instantly and set up a shout. Malcolm had his revolver ready and covered Richard like a flash.

"Hold on! Hold on! Don't shoot, for gracious sake!" breathed Smart, who had seized Horace. "Remember, whatever you do can be distinctly heard in the street."

"Help! Murder! Help!" roared Horace, taking the hint.

"Confound you, Horace, hold your tongue!" hissed Malcolm, clapping his left hand over his cousin's mouth, while with the other he held Dalton backed up against the wall with his revolver. "This won't do, Uncle Sammy; we must tie and gag 'em. Great Scott! What a lot of trouble that big, drunken wretch has made for us! Dalton, or whatever your name is, if you move I'll blow the whole top of your head off! Horace, if you squeal like that again you'll not get out of your coffin a second time, you can bet your existence on that!"

"Say, for gracious sake, stop chinning for one moment till I find a rope," grumbled the barber. "What shall I do with Horace? You can't manage 'em both."

"I'll fix that!" cried Malcom, suddenly removing his hand from his cousin's mouth and clutching his throat.

"Oh, Howard, don't kill me! Murder—murder!" gasped Horace.

Richard dashed upon Malcolm recklessly, but was seized by Smart.

But why detail the conflict which followed?

It is sufficient to state that in the end the two were completely conquered, and again found themselves helpless prisoners in the old sail loft.

They were tied hand and foot, but this time not gagged, which seemed to indicate that the persecutors meant to return at once.

They were alone, too, and the snores of the snorer continued.

"Well, they didn't get the will, and that's one consolation," said Horace Stearns, as the last echo of the retreating footsteps of the plotters had died away. "Where on earth did you manage to put it, Richard?"

"Ha, ha!" chuckled Richard. "I declare I can't help laughing in spite of the fix we're in."

"Why—what do you mean? If that will ain't found they'll kill us, my boy. I believe Howard is wicked enough for any evil deed."

"And if it is found and really does make me out the heir of your uncle's estate, they'll kill us anyhow. I can hardly believe it!"

"What?"

"That old Timothy Mayhew was really my uncle."

"It's true, though."

"Who told you?"

"'Twasn't told to me, but to Mollie."

"By the ghost?"

"By the ghost."

"And when you get as far as the ghost you always refuse to explain any further," sighed Richard. "I wish I could understand."

"Mollie made me promise," said Horace, hastily, "but I've a good mind to tell you. First tell me about the will, though. Where did you hide it, for hide it I know you did?"

"Why, the fact is," answered Richard, "when they hustled us up-stairs that time I managed to drop it into that big box where we hid."

"You did!"

"I did. I felt sure we should be searched and so we were."

"I don't see why he didn't kill us. I'm sure he means to sooner or later," moaned Horace. "I wish it could be settled quick, for I'm as good as dead now."

"Now, look here, don't you go and give up hope, for I ain't going to," answered Richard. "Tell me about the ghost. I'm dying to know all."

But before Horace could reply they were both greatly started by the sound of a heavy fall over in the direction of the office. Indeed, it seemed as though two falls, one immediately following the other, had taken place.

"What's that?" breathed Horace.

"I believe Doc has fallen down."

"But the other thing?" Something else fell beside a man."

"Say, don't you smell smoke?" exclaimed Horace.

"Yes, yes."

At the same instant a frantic yell resounded through the place.

"Fire! Fire!" came the voice of Doctor Bradish, shouting. "The stove's on top of me! I'm burning up!"

Then before the prisoners could even express their horror came the sound they had so dreaded to hear.

It was a heavy footstep on the stairs.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

THE GHOST OF THE HOUSE.

LYING there upon the slimy ooze before the open door, with the low swash of the waves making itself heard with horrible distinctness, Dan Brady's whole life seemed to rise up before him.

Things long forgotten were recalled to his recollection.

Vague, shadowy forms seemed to float before his eyes in the darkness—men and women, old and young—taking upon themselves likenesses of persons he had known in the past who had long since crossed the boundary which divides this world from that great and mysterious world of the hereafter, from which no man returns.

Was this the end?

Was the brave old detective, whose shrewdness and skill have made his name almost a household word, to be cut off in the midst of his usefulness?

It began to look so.

Dan Brady himself thought so as the moments crept by and the sullen swash of the tide grew nearer and nearer still.

Meanwhile above his head anything but silence had reigned. Voices talking loud and earnestly, trampling feet, and once a cry of murder and an appeal for help.

Now again all was still, however, and now it was that the strange, shadowy forms seemed to flit through the darkness before Brady's eyes.

Nearer crept the advancing tide, and still nearer.

It had come at last.

Brady could feel the water rising about his face.

He could not move, try as he would.

His body seemed sinking down into the mud. It was all in vain to twist and turn, for it availed nothing.

Matters, indeed, were beginning to assume a serious aspect, when all at once the detective's ears became conscious of a sound which certainly was not the swash of the ever rising water now forcing its way into the cellar.

It came from behind—it was the opening of a door!

At that moment Dan Brady would have given all his wealth to have been able to articulate a single word.

This, however, the gag prevented.

He could only strain his eyes in the darkness, and it seemed to him that he could distinguish a tall, white figure which differed from the shadowy phantoms of his imagination gliding toward him over the slimy floor.

"Is any one here?" spoke a low, sad voice—a woman's voice—and then a light flashed up.

And with the flash of the light hope once again flashed through the heart of Brady.

The shadowy form was a reality.

Before him stood a tall female figure draped in white.

It was the ghost of the Mayhew mansion—the form he had seen in the cemetery of the Cedars.

"I have come to save you, sir," she said.

CHAPTER TWENTY

ALL MYSTERY ENDS AT LAST.

WHILE these things were transpiring in the sub-cellar, up under the roof of the old building, Dalton and Horace were discussing their melancholy situation as they lay helpless prisoners upon the floor.

How perfectly the evil schemes of the plotters appeared to have been perfected! How certain it seemed that the winning cards were all in their hands!

And yet it was but an appearance. Unknown to them opposing influences were actually working against them which were destined to turn the tables most completely, and bring their desperate game to a finish in a way they little dreamed.

Desperate indeed seemed the situation of the two at the moment when we left them to follow the fortunes of Brady.

Now the pitiful cries of Dr. Bradish from the office were heard ringing out through the old sail loft again, now the heavy footstep upon the stairs grew louder and more distinct, coming nearer and nearer still.

"Oh—oh!" yelled the wretch, as the smoke came pouring through the partition, "save me, save me! Be merciful to me, a sinner! I did it. I mixed the poison. I confess all. I am the guilty man!"

"Dreadful," breathed Horace. "Poor wretch! Deeply as he has wronged me, I would save him if I could."

But Dalton could not answer.

A violent fit of coughing had seized him. The smoke was thick, black, suffocating. The building was an old one, and would unquestionably burn like tinder.

Were Howard Malcolm and his evil companion mad to keep on advancing?

The step on the stairs must be that of one of them, and it still continued. Now it was at the door.

"Help, help!" moaned Horace, losing, as it seemed, all control of himself.

But the voice of Dr. Bradish was not heard again.

"We are lost! It is useless. They will not save us!" breathed Richard, when suddenly through the gloom a crashing sound was heard and a faint light seemed to penetrate the smoke.

"Is any one here?" called a deep voice.

Then came the flames bursting through the partition.

There was light and to spare in the sail loft now.

It showed the boys the tall form of Brady standing in the doorway, and beside him a woman in white.

* * * * * * * *

"Fire! Fire! Fire!"

There was a crowd of men and boys dashing down Pearl street, all shouting the dread cry, waking the stillness of the night.

"Fire! Fire! Fire!"

Past the house with thirty steps the engines rattled, turning the corner by Dr. Letheridge's office into Peck Slip.

"Howard, my boy, there seems to be a fire somewhere!" exclaimed Samson Smart, as he stood beside his nephew in the hall of the Mayhew mansion. "Hadn't we better go out and see where it is?"

"What's the use? It don't concern us," growled Howard Malcolm. I'm a blamed sight more interested in finding out where you dropped that will."

They were searching for the lost will most anxiously, but thus far their efforts had met with no success.

After ascertaining that the will was neither on the person of the drunken physician nor yet in the possession of either Richard or Horace, the plotters found themselves, so to speak, all at sea.

"Uncle Sammy, you must have dropped it somewhere on the road," suggested Malcolm. "We had better go back over the ground and examine it inch by inch. After we have found the will we can return and settle with the prisoners.

They had got as far as the closet door on Samson's side and were now returning over the ground again.

Fifteen minutes elapsed, and while the search continued the noises in the street seemed to die away.

"It's no use," said the barber, despairingly. "We had better get below again and try it in the secret passage. We'll not accomplish anything here."

When he opened the secret panel in the vestibule, Samson remarked that it seemed to him as if he smelled smoke.

"It can't be that there's any trouble down at the sail loft?" he suggested anxiously.

"No, no! Come on!" exclaimed Howard. "The fire is probably down around the docks, and the wind has swept the smoke in through the sub-cellar door."

He passed through.

The barber was in the act of following him, when Malcolm leaped back and hastily closed the door.

"Great Cæsar's ghost!" he exclaimed, his face fairly livid.

"Wha—what's the matter?" gasped Samson, growing pale in turn.

At the same instant a loud noise was distinguishable behind the panel, and heavy blows came showering against the door on the inside.

"Matter! Why, the vault is full of people. Didn't you see? Don't you hear?"

"Where—when—what—which?" stammered the barber idiotically.

"Brace up, man! Horace, the boy and Aunt Jane are all in the vault. There's a couple of strange men, too! Don't you hear? All is discovered! We must fly!"

"Oh, oh, oh!" groaned Samson as they retreated upstairs; "to think that the fat should all be dumped into the fire just at the moment when everything promised success! Anyhow, though, the detective's dead."

A crash was heard behind them even as he spoke, followed by the sound of heavy footfalls upon the thirtieth step.

"There they go! There they go! I saw them slip upstairs!" the voice of Dalton was heard shouting, and many people came trooping up into the hall.

"Say, this is getting serious, uncle!" breathed Malcolm. "To the closet, old man! We must escape to the street through your shop."

"Oh, how I wish I could strangle that hag!" snapped the barber viciously. "I saw her over the stairs. So she's the ghost, is she? So she's the witch who has blocked our little game? Just let me get my hands on her! U-r-r-rgh! I could str-a-n-g-l-e her! No matter; my turn will come yet!"

"Meanwhile suppose you hold your jaw and see if you can find the spring that moves this infernal closet," hissed Malcolm, who was bending down before the book-shelves which filled the closet.

Samson sprang to the rescue.

It was time.

Loud shouts could now be heard behind them.

Mingling with the shouts the pleading voice of Mrs. Smart was distinguishable, praying that her husband might be spared.

"At last!" burst from Malcolm, as the closet swung inward, and the two scoundrels glided through it.

Samson swung the shelves back into position, closed and bolted the door, leaning against the wall when all was accomplished, as he expressed it, "as weak as a rat."

A furious banging followed upon the shelves on the other side.

"Now, look here, uncle, we've got just about two seconds to act in," whispered Malcolm. "We can't expect to hold them off long. What is our move to be?"

"We'll skip out by the shop," whispered Samson, "and lay over to Jersey. It'll take time to nab us there. Meanwhile we'll have a chance to think."

"Let's look out the window and see if the coast is clear first," said Malcom.

But when they looked down upon the sidewalk there were two policemen standing near the door of Samson's shop.

"Blocked again!" breathed the barber, in dismay.

"Say, have you the key that Bradish used on Dr. Letheridge's door?" whispered Malcolm.

"Yes—yes."

"Let's escape that way."

"But the doctor?"

"This will settle him," hissed Malcolm, displaying his revolver.

They put their plan into execution immediately.

When the door separating Smart's costuming establishment from Dr. Letheridge's bedroom was opened the latter was found to be deserted.

They stole down-stairs and found the office equally so.

All was dark and still.

"I've got the key to the outer door," whispered Samson. "We'll just vamoose down Peck Slip in no time. 'Tis the very thing."

He opened the door cautiously, and was about to peer out, when a sharp cry from Howard drove him back.

"Don't do it. Throw up your hands, Howard Malcolm," cried one of two men who leaped suddenly through the open door.

"Dan Brady!"

"Dr. Letheridge!"

The first from Howard Malcolm, the last from Samson Smart.

In a second the little office was full of people.

Horace Stearns and Dalton were among them.

"I knew we'd fetch you!" roared the doctor.

He felled the barber with a single blow, and deliberately planted his foot upon him just as Dan Brady, seizing Malcolm by the throat, pressed him back against the wall.

* * * * * * * * *

Marriage notice taken from the New York *Herald* six weeks later:

"STEARNS-MAYHEW. On the 10th inst., at Trinity Church, by the Reverend Matthew Pullman, Mr. Horace Stearns to Miss Mary Mayhew, all of this city. No cards."

Better than all the fine phrases and flowing paragraphs which we could use do these few lines portray the end of an exciting tale.

Virtually it ended in Dr. Letheridge's little office, for Howard Malcolm and his tonsorial uncle finished out the night in the Tombs, and next day the world knew all.

But little remains to be said.

Horace and Richard were rescued by Dan Brady. Dr. Bradish, dead beneath an overturned stove, had to be abandoned. The building was burned to the ground.

Breaking out through the restaurant, our little party were met by the firemen and the police, who had been prompt to reach the scene.

But before this, Richard had rescued the will from the big box at the foot of the stairs, and Mrs. Smart with many tears announced herself as the mother whom our hero had never known.

And the rest?

It was simple.

Back through the secret passage they hurried, accompanied by a policeman and two firemen.

Mrs. Smart showed the working of the secret spring, and they gained the thirtieth step just in time to see Malcolm and the barber flying up the stairs.

"They'll escape by the closet if we ain't careful," whispered Brady to Richard and Horace.

Leaving the others to follow, they three left the house hurriedly.

Already officers had been dispatched from the scene of the fire to watch the door of the barber's shop, so Brady, remembering the other exit, hurried around the corner, running directly into Dr. Letheridge's arms.

What followed after that has already been told.

In due course of time a trial came and Howard Malcolm received a life sentence.

Samson Smart turning State's evidence escaped with ten years.

Long before that Horace and Mary Mayhew were married, and Dalton found himself a very rich man, as he proved to be sole heir to the Mayhew estates under his uncle's will.

But he proved generous.

To that Horace and Dan Brady can both testify.

He insisted upon dividing the estates equally with his cousins, and bestowed upon Brady a liberal reward.

Visit Pearl street now and you will find a dirty tenement at the corner of Peck Slip, an ancient mansion turned into lodgings and stores. The secret passage has been closed long ago, the foundation of many of the new buildings between Pearl street and the water standing lower than the ground through which it ran.

Thus does time bring changes, and the great Pearl street poisoning case has long since been forgotten.

Often Dalton, now a wealthy property owner, passes along Pearl street.

When he reaches the corner of Peck Slip he always stops and raises his eyes curiously.

He is looking at an ancient structure which was once his property.

It is The House with Thirty Steps.

Do not fail to read "Strange Experiences" on page 40. They will interest you.

TAKE NOTICE!

The feature stories that have been published in this magazine are well worth reading, if you have not already seen them. The list is as follows:

NO.
1 THE EEL MAN, by Robert Carlton Brown
2 ZITANA OF MAISON ROUGE, by F. W. Doughty
3 THE MYSTERIOUS WEB, by Armstrong Perry
4 UNDER THE HYPNOTIC SPELL, by Dr. H. Enton
5 THE SILKEN SHEATH, by Crittenden Marriott
6 A FORTUNE TELLER'S SECRET, by Gladys Hall
7 THE MYSTIC EMBLEM, by Marie Coolidge Rask
8 THE CARDS OF FATE, by William Goode
9 MR. BACHELLER'S APARTMENTS. By William Hamilton Osborne
10 THE INNER WHEEL, by Octavius Roy Cohen
11 THE VOICE OF THE VALLEY, by Robert C. Brown
12 THE SIGN OF THE SEVEN SHARKS, by Charles F. Oursler
13 UNDER A MASK, by Crittenden Marriott
14 CASE 4,444, by Gladys Hall
15 AFTER A MILLION, by Police Captain Howard
16 SHADOWING THE BLUE TRIANGLE, by Charles F. Oursler
17 THE CASE OF CAPTAIN FORTESQUE, by R. Ingalls
18 THE BIRD-HEADED SPHINX, by Edith S. Tupper
19 A DOUBLE MYSTERY, by Dr. Harry Enton
20 THE MAGICIAN DETECTIVE, by C. F. Oursler
21 KING COBRA MYSTERY, by George Gilbert
22 THE HAUNTED CORRIDORS, by Wm. H. Osborne
23 NO MAN'S MAN, by Maxwell Smith

NO.
24 THE TREVOR PUZZLE, by T. C. Harbaugh
25 THE TRAIL OF ROSES, by Edmund Condon
26 THE HINDOO VANISHING CLUE, by Pauline C. Bouve.
27 WHO WAS GUILTY? by Beulah Poynter
28 THE EVIL EYE, by Chas. F. Oursler
29 THE THIRTEENTH DOOR, by Edith Sessions Tupper
30 THE GAME OF DETECTIVE CAREW, by L. Jerome
31 LAW-MAKER AND LAW-BREAKER, by Beulah Poynter
32 THE COUNTERFEIT HEIRESS, by Inspector John Harrigan
33 TRACKED TO CHINA, by Chief Roger O'Brien
34 AFTER THE GERMAN SPIES, by May Halsey Miller
35 THE CLUE IN THE BOX, by Alexander Douglas
36 TRAILED BY A FRENCH DETECTIVE, by Rene Renaud
37 A DROP OF INK, by Lieutenant Robert W. Warden
38 THE TEN DOCTORS, by Allan Arnold Fox
39 THE STAIN ON PAGE 61, by Chas. T. Jordan
40 A MASKED MYSTERY, by Police Sergeant Kelly.
41 THE BLACK SOUL, by Beulah Poynter.
42 SANCTUARY, by William Hamilton Osborne.
43 THE MYSTERY OF THE SEVEN SHADOWS, by Charles F. Oursler.
44 THE SIGN OF THE DRAGON, by C. Martin Eddy, Jr.
45 THE MAGIC OF DETECTIVE WOO FANG, by Frank F. Whitfield.
46 THE DECOY, by William Hamilton Osborne.

If you cannot procure any of the numbers you want from your newsdealer, send us the price, ten cents, in money or postage stamps, and we will mail them to you postage free. Address

FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher, 168 West 23d St., New York.

THE SILVER WITCH

BY POLICE DETECTIVE FINNERTY

PART ONE

"IF you think there is anything in the case, you are the man to undertake it," the chief remarked, with a dubious shake of his dignified gray head.

"There are a thousand dollars in it for the man who can find the lost daughter of old Ezra Wesvelle," answered detective Ed Bradley.

"That is, providing she is found before he marries Editha Daneforth," the chief smiled meaningly.

"Do you think the interesting event likely to come off soon? Anyhow, I can't see how his marriage will effect the matter," said Bradley.

The venerable superior again smi'ed.

"When a woman, young, clever, and charming, takes for her husband a decrepit octogenarian, she is apt to expect a handsome reward for her services," said he.

"Well?" said the detective.

"In this instance," he resumed, "the octogenarian has some doubts and scruples. If his daughter could, just at this crisis, be restored and reconciled to him, the marriage might be delayed, or possibly prevented altogether. At least, she would receive her inheritance before he took his new wife."

"Yes," was Bradley's only comment.

"I know Ezra Wesvelle intimately—I know his weaknesses, his obstinacy, his liberality," the chief continued. "After this marriage he will become more and more indifferent to the fate of his daughter; and finally all his scruples will be directed in favor of the clever and charming young woman who has condescended to be the nurse and amuser of his declining age. And if anything less than his entire fortune will satisfy her then I have not judged her aright—that's all! But if Carrie Wesvelle is no longer living, there is nobody to complain—old Ezra Wesvelle has no relatives."

"Well, I have hopes of discovering the missing daughter," said Bradley. "And I am quite ready to undertake the case. A sort of needle-in-the-haystack search though it seems!"

"It is more of a wild goose chase, I should say," laughed he, as Bradley bid him goodday and left his office.

There had been an almost unprecedented mystery involving the disappearance of Carrie Wesvelle.

She was of domestic tastes, was a devoted daughter, and was not known to have any favored lover who could have lured her away.

A year before, one stormy, autumn evening, she had left her father's mansion, where she presided as mistress; and she had never returned.

Her father's car had driven her to an up-town church, where a sacred concert was to be rendered. She had instructed the chauffeur to shelter his Packard somewhere until the time for driving home, and she had left her superfluous wraps in the machine.

The chauffeur saw her enter the church, and heard her speak to some girl friend in the vestibule, but when the performance was over, Carrie Wesvelle was not among the audience.

Some one recalled having observed a stately girl in black silk going down an aisle during one of the interludes. Some one else had remarked her having a whispered colloquy with a gentleman unknown. But she had never appeared again, and not the smallest clew to her conduct nor the slightest trace of her had ever been obtained.

Old Ezra Wesvelle himself believed she must have made a runaway marriage with some unguessed lover whom she knew he would distinctly oppose, and he was angered accordingly.

But there were not a few who believed his daughter to be the victim of some as yet unrevealed tragedy.

Perhaps she had been confused by some sudden illness; perhaps, faint and bewildered, she had wandered away through the storm, and so into the river; or perhaps even worse had befallen her, for there was a dreary and dangerous neighborhood intervening between the church and the river not far away.

If she were living, she would never have puzzled her acquaintances, distressed her friends, and distracted the father she loved by any such prolonged mystery and silence many believed.

There were others, too, who upheld the opinion of her father, and they were not disposed to wonder that the desolate and wifeless old gentleman had sought consolation and companionship in a wedlock with one so charming as Editha Daneforth.

Deserted, stung to the heart by the deception and unfilial behavior of his petted only child, no one could blame him for taking to himself a wife—even if he was a feeble old man and his chosen bride young enough to be his granddaughter!

Bradley had reasons of his own for deeming Carrie Wesvelle among the living, and that he should ultimately ascertain her whereabouts.

A few months before he had been tracking a noted female known as "The Silver Witch."

She had acquired the appellation by the extraordinary success with which she had exchanged thousands upon thousands of spurious coin for genuine currency.

But she was wanted just then for an offense more heinous—for a crime which, if justice were not thwarted, would consign her to imprisonment for the remainder of her natural life.

The trail had led Bradley to an almost unpopulated tract of country in an interior State.

His destination was a rambling town in the midst of a stretch of narrow prairie; and here he halted on the morning of an unusually mild day in the late winter.

But the Silver Witch had gone.

She had departed eastward on the previous afternoon with a man whose described personality was not familiar to the detective.

But undoubtedly he was a confederate; for the two had arrived together, and had been inseparable companions during their stay. As Major Huntly and Mrs. Arleigh they had been rather popular with the simple town's folk, who had marveled at the lady's magnificent wardrobe and the gentleman's lavish expenditure of money.

"They have gone straight through to New York," decided Bradley at once. "And after all there is no hiding-place

more secure, and more impenetrable to a detective, than that afforded among the thousand-and-one retreats of a large city."

The day was temptingly mild, and he spent the spare hour before train time in a stroll along the flat and snowy banks of the stream, which just above the town widened into a broad and currentless expanse of frozen water.

Nothing could be duller than the view of that level, snowy country around him.

Here and there was a solitary tree, gaunt and gnarly, and laden with congealed masses of frozen snow or ragged icicles fast melting in the unusually soft sunshine.

On the opposite bank was a single lonely building, rudely built and uninclosed; but it was evidently a dwelling of some sort, for he could discern a moving human form within the one high and square window—which was the only aperture of any kind visible in the blank, unpainted, wooden walls.

As he indifferently contemplated the lonely hut he became aware that something of more than ordinary moment was transpiring within that bleak and solidly fashioned building.

Suddenly the form emerged upon the window-sill; he beheld a lithe and yet athletic young man, who drew forward another figure—that of a young girl seemingly unconscious—which he gently lowered to the ground as he sprang lightly down.

As if she had been an infant he lifted her to his strong shoulders, bound her there securely by the folds of her long loose cloak, and then with what seemed the haste of some lively apprehension he hurried down the low bank and proceeded to cross the treacherously softening ice of the river.

Half the way across the ice cracked and broke beneath their weight. But he seemed to have prepared himself for the emergency.

As it yielded beneath his feet, as it upheaved in quaking fragments all about him, he threw himself vigorously and yet easily forward, clutched a jagged, floating block, and so, half swimming, headed for the shore.

The girl was still a mute and motionless burden, although, as if by some unconscious instinct, she seemed to tighten the clasp of her tiny hands about his shoulders.

But her white face was convulsed as if with a terror of more than death. Her black eyes were fixed in a delirious stare as the young man, with bleeding hands, struggled heroically for life and for her.

With a shout of encouragement Bradley turned with the intention of obtaining assistance; but at the instant a light flashed down the narrow by-road from the town, and swiftly wheeled to the very verge of the ice.

A nimble negro jumped to the ground, snatched a coil of rope from the vehicle, and with surprising dexterity tossed an end almost into the grasp of the struggling young man.

As he caught the coil, Bradley took hold of the other end, which the negro was already pulling with the might of a black Titan.

"Dat am not ob necessity, sah," he said, with a consequential grin, which disclosed his splendid ivory teeth. "I hab de muscle foh de occasion, and de young massa he hab de missa safe, suah."

And they were already safe, indeed.

With one last, vigorous effort the young man had struggled to his feet upon the firmer margin ice, and in another second he had transferred his burden to the closed car.

Then, hatless and panting with his exertions, he sprang to the seat beside her.

He turned a quick glance toward the office for a second, and then was away like the wind.

"Who are they?" the detective asked the negro.

"My knowledge ob dat am limitous," he answered. "De young massa he hab de auto all ready. I spects he hab warning ob dat ice, and he pays me to drive round heah foh him and de sick missa."

"Could he not have driven her from the hut without crossing the river?" Bradley inquired.

"De road ober dar?—dat road, sah, leads to nowhere," he explained, with a pompous uplifting of his woolly head. "De riber it am de short cut to de town, and de only cut, sah. And I had suspicions dat de young massa was mighty skeered about circumambulating de multitudiniscient streets with de present company, sah."

Although his orthography was somewhat startling, his idea was lucid enough.

"It seems a pity to leave so nice a hat to rot in the river," said Bradley as he glanced toward that article, which the wind was blowing about on the broken ice.

"I hab assured myself ob dat interesting point, sah," said the African, giving the rope an adroit twist and jerk, and hauling both rope and hat toward him.

As he took up the hat something was dislodged from the lining of the crown and fluttered to the officer's feet.

He stooped, and, unnoticed by the darky, picked up a card, inscribed in a girlish chirography with the name of "Carrie Wesvelle."

He slipped the card into his wallet, although at the time the name was strange to him. He had no knowledge then of the Wesvelle family, and was not yet aware that such a young lady was missing.

Naturally, as a detective, Bradley stored the singu'ar incident away as a possible record in his memory.

But for a time he had quite forgotten it.

The officer had been engaged in pursuit of the elusive Silver Witch; and later had been occupied with a robbery case—which, however, has no connection with her career.

But he remembered it all now as he walked away from the office of his superior.

"If I am to find the lost Wesvelle heiress, I must first learn something about the gallant young man who carried that unconscious girl away from the lonely hut," Bradley thought.

Just then Bradley's meditations were interrupted by a pedestrian, who had accidentally jostled him in passing.

"I beg your pardon," he said, courteously.

And he looked up to behold the identical young man of whom he had been meditating, and whom he believed could, if he would, disclose the whereabouts of Carrie Wesvelle.

PART TWO

"I AM rather glad you nudged me in the ribs," Bradley said to the young man, whose information he believed would be valuable in the case. "I should be sorry to have passed without speaking to you. You are just the gentleman whom I most wished to see."

He regarded the detective with a courteously questioning scrutiny before he made any response whatever.

And Bradley knew by the look of his fearless blue eyes, by his frank and earnest face, that however much he might be associated with the mystery surrounding the lost girl, he was guiltless of wrong, either of deed or intent.

"I remember you," he said, quietly, at length. "You witnessed a certain perilous adventure of mine some months since"

The officer bowed admission of the fact and introduced himself.

"And I," he smiled, "am Frederick Ilsley, of the legal fraternity. I was trying to establish the authenticity of a disputed land title when I was stopping in the obscure town where I providentially met Miss Wesvelle."

"Where is she now?" Bradley asked.

"Under existing circumstances I should scarcely like to say, even if I knew," he answered, guardedly.

"Under existing circumstances," the detective repeated, rather sternly, "you ought to tell me all you know, surmise or think. Why was she there in that lonely town, in that desolate hut?"

"She was brought there stupefied with drugs," he told Bradley. "She was kept there a captive until she was half insane with the horrors of it all, and there she would have died had I not rescued her."

"And afterward?" the operative queried.

"I procured a safe shelter for her with a relative of mine," Ilsley said, "and there she remained until a few weeks since. When she had sufficiently recovered she obtained a situation somewhere, and so she bade us good-by and left us."

"All this is very strange," the detective commented. "Why did she not return to her father?" But, to begin at the beginning, why did she leave her home at all?"

"She was abducted openly in the open street," said Ilsley, whose fine face was flushing and paling with passionate indignation. "This man entered the church with the pretext that her father was suddenly and seriously ill. Once outside, he clutched her in his arms, stifled her cries with a handkerchief soaked with chloroform, and then drove rapidly away. When she partially regained her senses she was upon the westward express, to the passengers of which she had been represented as a lunatic being conveyed to a private asylum."

"What was this man's motive?" asked Bradley.

"He is and was probably scheming to secure the Wesvelle wealth," Ilsley answered. "He has persecuted her with declarations of love; he had been enraged by her refusal and unconcealed dislike of him, and so he planned alike for revenge and for a fortune."

"But why did you rescue her in that Quixotic fashion?" said Bradley more and more amazed and puzzled. "Why did you not notify the authorities? They would have released her and punished him."

"Not there—not in that rude town," Ilsley said, quickly. "What could she prove or disprove, weak and ill and half delirious as she was, and among utter strangers? She was in his power. He claimed to be her guardian, and that she was a dangerous maniac. I should have had a reckoning with him if I could have met him in the town after my discovery of the captive in the hut; but I could learn nothing coherent from her then. After fainting and fever delirium she became unconscious. She would have died had I been a few hours later."

"Ilsley," said Bradley incredulously, "you are telling me a queer tale. Who is this scoundrel?"

"The man is known as Mosely Daneforth; he is the confidential friend of Miss Wesvelle's father, and his alleged sister is about becoming the wife of that gentleman," Ilsley announced with agitation.

"This is a most unaccountable story, Ilsley," the officer iterated impatiently. "In such a state of affairs Miss Wesvelle certainly ought to return home at once."

"I quite agree with you," Ilsley assented. "But when she became herself again she would listen to neither arguments nor persuasions. She fears the influence of her enemy with her father. She believes if she were to return home, if she were to reveal the incredible truth, that she would be denounced as a mad-woman, that she would straightway be incarcerated in a mad-house."

"That might be possible, too," admitted Bradley.

"There is but one way to right Carrie Wesvelle, he continued earnestly. "There is but one way to restore her to her home and friends, to save her from publicity and from investigations which would be distractingly painful to a refined and sensitive girl."

"You are anxious to serve her, I perceive," the detective said, rather impulsively.

"I am," he asserted, frankly. "I love her better than my life. And, for her sake, I mean to unearth the antecedence of this man Daneforth. An offense so bold, so daringly and skillfully executed, could only have been planned by one of practical experience in the modes of crime! If there happens to be a former felony for which he is wanted, he can be sufficiently punished without involving Miss Wesvelle in any mortifying contingencies."

This suggestion struck the detective as being somewhat orginal at any rate. But he had his own reasons for not saying whether he thought it feasible or not.

Detective though he was, familiar with crime of all variations and criminals of every degree, he scarcely liked to suspect rank felony of a man who was the confidential friend of old Ezra Wesvelle.

Bradley was inclined to imagine that Fred Ilsley had been misled by the overmastering love he bore the fugitive daughter, and that she really was a lunatic, irresponsible alike for her actions and her wild tale of persecution and abduction.

Altogether the story sounded more like romancing than sober reality.

But Ilsley was honest and zealous, and the officer might have need of his aid before he should have done with this intricate and mystifying case.

"Was Daneforth stopping in the town while he had instituted himself jailer of the hut?" the officer asked Bradley.

"He must have been, of course," said Ilsley. "Miss Wesvelle thinks he had his sister with him, as a woman always accompanied him in his stealthy visits to the hut. From certain researches I have already begun, I judge they must have left the town just previous to her rescue."

Bradley started at what impressed him as being a very suggestive item of information.

There had certainly been no Mosely Daneforth and sister registered at any of the three or four hotels in the place; and the only couple who have been on the previous day passengers from that obscure railway station was the Silver Witch and her companion.

There must have been some error in the dates, or a somewhat inexplicable coincidence.

"If you believe this charge against Daneforth, why do you not invite him to an interview, tax him with the abduction, and give him the alternatives of arrest or leaving the country," said Bradley to Ilsley.

"That is precisely what I am about to do," said he, glancing at his watch. "If you will come with me to my rooms, I will give you the opportunity of enacting the least desirable role of the many your profession is compelled to assume."

"That of eaves-dropper, I suppose. However, I am hardened to that," Bradley laughed, as he followed him up the steps of a richly appointed brown-stone house.

"We need not use ugly terms," he returned, in pleasant banter, as he ushered me into a cozy parlor. "We'll just say you chanced to be enjoying a book and a cigar behind

this curtain, and that you unavoidably saw my visitor and heard our conversation."

He had just placed a chair for the detective behind the russet plush hangings of an alcove when the bell rang, a servant tapped at the door, and then he was admitted.

Mosely Daneforth was not the sort of man one would easily recognize from a description. There was nothing especially noticeable about him. He had a large frame, with no superfluous flesh; he had closely-cropped, brown hair, a broad and unshaven visage, and an enigmatical expression of physiognomy. There was no attempt of the modish in his substantial garments, and his gray, high hat, with its broad black band, might have suited equally well a gambler or doctor, a sporting man or a clergyman.

"You are Mr. Ilsley, I presume?" he began, as he paused in the center of the room. "Will you allow me to inquire the nature of the urgent business to which you referred in your surprising note of yesterday?"

His manner was irreproachably polite, and his expression was that of a man who feels his curiosity has prompted him to do something very irregular and business-like.

But there was a vague inflection in his suave tones, an undefined gleam in his small eyes which hinted of something like insolence, uneasiness, and menace also.

"The business concerns the abduction of Miss Carrie Wesvelle, who was left to perish in a lonely hut on the outskirts of an obscure town," Fred explained, with ominous composure.

"Good gracious!" Daneforth ejaculated, with the most natural air in the world. "You don't intend to say the poor girl was abducted, do you? Why, such a thing is monstrous—it is incredible!"

That natural air of shocked incredulity seemed to confound the intrepid Ilsley for a moment.

He fixed one long penetrating look upon the seemingly amazed Daneforth, turned slowly to the window, and stood gazing in thoughtful silence into the bright noonday outside.

Daneforth had settled his large frame upon the edge of a table in the center of the room, his hat in one hand, the other holding his substantial cane.

As Fred continued silent, he suddenly bent forward in an attitude of expressive wondering expostulation.

"My dear sir," he remarked, with some needless emphasis, "permit me to say that if such a flagrant wrong has been perpetrated, Miss Wesvelle's father is the one to be consulted. I do not understand why you chose me instead."

Fred turned then, his fine eyes flashing fire.

"I chose you," he said, almost fiercely, "because Carrie Wesvelle lives to denounce you as her persecutor!"

Daneforth seemed to flinch, but no more than an innocent man might have done at such a charge as that.

Then he straightened himself upright, adjusted his hat with deliberate precision upon his round head, tucked his cane under one arm, and walked to the door.

"Frederick Ilsley," he returned, in accents which seemed to emphasize something more of menace than defense, "if this is a black-mailing scheme, you have mistaken the man with whom you have to deal. I have a mind to commend you to the police and have done with it."

While he had been lounging on the center-table, Bradley had moved noiselessly from the alcove, and so into the thickly carpeted hall.

He had purposed one of the brazen tests which Bradley's profession occasionally considers pardonable because expedient.

As he arose to withdraw, the officer had cautiously opened the outer door, and when he left the room Bradley assumed the position of a person just entering the house.

"Why, how are you, Major Huntly?" said he, stretching out a hand with great cordiality as he came down the hall. "I am delighted to meet you again. And how is dear Mrs. Arleigh?"

PART THREE

If Mosely Daneforth were the heinous offender Ilsley believed him to be, then certainly his assurance and alert command of resources were not to be surpassed.

He slightly paused, politely and natural, as any one would have done in similar circumstances.

There was neither an added flush or an added pallor on his broad visage as he tilted his cane under one arm and rested his other hand upon the knob of the door.

"Oh, there is no need to apologize," said he, coolly, assuming that Bradley was to do about what he had no intention of doing. "I have been very frequently saluted for your Major Huntly. It's only a not uncommon case of 'the fellow who looks like me,' you know," he concluded as he stepped briskly over the threshold and went actually whistling the once popular air down the street.

"He is too confoundly cool altogether," Bradley thought as he turned to join Ilsley, as he was pacing excitedly up and down the cozy parlor.

"He is quite capable of having me locked up for a blackmailer," said Fred, his fine face white with passion. "He has some scheme afoot. He is confident of success, except for my interference. He will want me out of his way."

"You reason like a detective to the manner born," said Bradley smilingly.

"What do you think yourself?" demanded Ilsley, not a little nettled by my reticence.

"We detectives cannot indulge in confessionals."

"I advise you to begin an immediate search for Miss Wesvelle, and to submit everything else entirely to me. She must be produced. You love her, and you will find her, if you direct your energies wholly to that result."

"You will forfeit the thousand dollars in my favor then, I suppose?" Ilsley commented, with good-humored irony.

"A fig for the thousand dollars!" retorted Bradley, with the recklessness of an old war-horse smelling the smoke of battle. "I suppose a man can work for zeal of his profession if he does chance to be a tracer of human guilt."

"And I must obey you blindly, it seems," said Ilsley, only half satisfied.

"Yes, and with diligence, if you would aid me and right the girl you love," said Bradley with decision.

In less than an hour later Fred Ilsley had begun the work assigned him, and Bradley was driving as fast as a taxi-cab could carry him toward the Wesvelle residence.

The detective had conceived the notion that he should like to have a sight of the charming and clever Miss Edith Daneforth, and that a little discursive chat with her might not be amiss; and he desired to ascertain where he might have the honor of presenting himself to the lady.

Ostensibly his errand was to assure old Ezra Wesvelle of the speedy return of his missing daughter.

He did not seem immensely gratified, however.

"I have always thought Carrie united herself with some one whom she knew I should never acknowledge as a son-in-law. I could have forgiven the alliance, or misalliance, but her deception has arranged my affections from her," he said in his feeble, obstinate way.

"I pledge my word she has made no alliance of any kind," emphatically answered Bradley.

But Mr. Wesvelle mysteriously shook his silvery head.

"Daneforth conjectures a good deal which he is keeping from me, I think!—he considers she has caused me grief enough, and he would spare me more, I suppose," said the gentleman. "If she returns I shall settle an annuity sufficient for her life-time upon her. But otherwise I have done with her forever."

"You and Mr. Daneforth were boys together, I believe?"

"Oh, dear no!" the old gentleman replied readily, and without guessing any object in my remark; "he is many a long year younger than I. And I have only known Mosely something more than twelve months; but he is as helpful a friend as ever a man had. He was sincerely attached to Carrie; he believes my daughter must have been deranged."

"Well, I hope I shall soon have some decisive intelligence for you," said Bradley, arising to go.

"I, too, hope it will be soon," he responded. "I should like everything fully and plainly settled, as I am about making a transfer of my property to the young lady who has consented to be the comfort of my declining age. Immediately after our marriage, a week hence, we shall leave for England, where her brother has several large estates demanding his attention."

"The lovely Miss Daneforth is your guest, I believe?" Bradley ventured to observe, as if unthinkingly.

"She was until an hour ago," Mr. Wesvelle said candidly enough. "Mosely has just taken her away for a visit to a New Jersey friend. She will remain there until the morning of our marriage."

The detective felt rather baffled. But if Miss Editha Daneforth had been taken to Kamchatka or the South Sea Islands, he should have resolved to betake himself after her just the same.

He spent the remainder of the afternoon sauntering around the entrance of the Wesvelle garage, which opened on a contiguous street.

And at length the Wesvelle automobile bowled up to the heavy doors, the car flecked with dust.

"Do you know there is a law against driving without lights?" Bradley said to the chauffeur.

Displaying just a gleam of his badge, just sufficient to mislead him, he walked up to the car.

"'Tain't my fault," the man said, sullenly, and with no little alarm.

"How far have you driven this car? Tell me the exact truth, and I will let you off," said Bradley.

And he did tell Bradley, too; and just as dusk was darkening into night, he started on a trip to the New Jersey village where the lovely Editha Daneforth had secluded herself.

Late the same evening he reached the house—an isolated little cottage surrounded by tall poplars and fronted by a shrubby garden.

Late as it was the door was ajar—perhaps to admit a waftage of air, as the night was oppressively hot for early September.

But nobody was visible, nor did anybody seem to heed the officer's ring.

The parlor door, too, was open; a light was burning brightly on the mantel, but the room was without an occupant.

He waited until he fancied patience was ceasing to be a virtue, and then quietly walked into the parlor and appropriated an easy-chair. He also appropriated something else—a letter with the significant address, "Mrs. Arleigh," and which had been dropped between the cushioned back and seat of the chair. The detective did not venture a perusal there and then. He slipped the epistle into a pocket, leaned back against the cushions and listened for the footsteps which did not come.

The minutes elapsed, and still nobody — not even a servant—became visible.

It is not often a detective is caught napping, but he was thoroughly persuaded he was upon that particular occasion.

The night was sultry; the house was still; Bradley was somewhat fatigued from the work of the day, and so must momentarily have succumbed to drowsiness.

But abruptly he became conscious of a subtle odor of a suffocating sensation, as if some damp thing were being pressed over his face.

In a second he was aroused to wakeful vigilance.

But he did not struggle, even when he felt cords tightening about him, when he realized that he was being bound hand and foot, and that the odor was of chloroform. The officer maintained instead a semblance of passive repose, resolutely held his breath, let his muscles relax, and drooped his head weakly upon his breast.

He knew he could adroitly release one hand; he could trust to his revolver for safety.

"There, he is unconscious," he heard a man's tones mutter. "With him out of the way, we shall carry the thing through successfully. The spy little thought my eyes were upon him when he was coming up the garden path. There is no use binding him; the flames will finish the job. The house will be in a blaze in a second more, and we must get out and away before a crowd is attracted."

Bradley heard a man's hurrying tread, and the quick sweep of a woman's garments down the low steps and over the graveled walk of the garden before he stirred even to shake the deadly handkerchief from his nostrils.

Then he tottered to his feet, loosed the half-knotted cords, and staggering like one drunk, managed to gain the cooler air outside. He did not care to brave again the experience of those few brief minutes. Sixty seconds more of that deadly gas would have killed a stronger man than he; or had those cords been tightened by a half knot more securely, he must have been killed with the burning cottage.

The detective could understand why they had chosen that method to rid themselves of his surveillance.

With cords and chloroform there would be no outcry; the ashes of the burned cottage would bury the evidences of their crime until they could put themselves beyond apprehension. A pistol shot might have failed in its aim; the report might have excited the curiosity of somebody; and they did not care to risk possibilities which might be fatal to ther scheme.

But the single minute they had unwittingly granted was Bradley's salvation and their destruction.

However, they believed they had foiled his interference, and he was particularly cautious not to enlighten them prematurely.

"Old Ezra Wesvelle has requested us to discontinue any further search for his daughter," the chief said to Bradley a few mornings afterward. "He disowns and disinherits her utterly. He stopped in just now on his way to his lawyer's house, where Miss Daneforth has been a guest for the last few days. He is about to transfer his property to his betrothed wife, and they are to draw up the forms."

"This letter ought to prevent any such arrangement as that," said Bradley, handing to his superior the letter appropriated from the cottage.

"Great heavens! I should think it should," he exclaimed, as he glanced over the contents and handed it back. "You must go over there at once, and you had better take one of our best men with you."

As they descended the office stairs they met Fred Ilsley coming up for Bradley.

"Well?" queried the detective, as he turned and walked on beside them.

"I have brought her with me," he said. "But she shrinks from the ordeal."

"There will be no ordeal," said Bradley. "Come with us and judge for yourself."

They reached the house of the lawyer just as the papers for the transfer of the property had been drawn ready for the proper signatures.

Mosely Daneforth met them at the door of the library, his broad visage placidly enigmatical even when he perceived the detective.

Whether he was really confident no charge could be proven against him, or whether he believed the Wesvelle thousands and Wesvelle influence would save him.

"Come in, gentlemen," he said, with the cheerfulness of unsuspecting innocence; "you will only be delayed until this little transaction is finished."

Fred Ilsley clinched his hands and set his teeth sharply between his whitening lips as they seated themselves in the chairs Daneforth had politely indicated in the circle about the great library table.

And just then the door again opened to admit two persons—one old Ezra Wesvelle with his weak, obstinate and benevolent countenance—and the other Editha Daneforth!

In her short walking dress, with her loose, golden hair, her transparently fair skin and her pouting scarlet mouth, she looked more like the guiltless child than the woman Bradley knew her to be.

Shyly, with those marvelously angelic eyes trustingly uplifted, she placed one snowy, dimpled hand in the wrinkled palm her aged lover extended to her.

"Editha," he said, "you sacrifice your youth for me, and I can do no less than endow you with all my worldly possessions."

Then he gently loosed the pretty hand and moved toward the other side of the table, where the lawyer stood holding the paper for his signature.

"I am compelled to interpose," said Bradley, springing to his feet at this juncture and seizing the dimpled wrist of that snowy hand. "This woman is known in police annals as the notorious Silver Witch. For some time I have held a warrant authorizing her arrest for the poisoning of her reputed husband. Daneforth is her accomplice."

Meanwhile his companion detective had snapped a pair of handcuffs upon the wrists of Daneforth, who was too astonished to resist even if he could have done so with Fred Ilsley gripping his throat.

"This man is a convict, escaped from a prison to which he had been sentenced for life," the detective said, as he led Daneforth away without further ceremony.

"If he had a dozen lives his crimes could not all be expiated," cried Ilsley, who was maddened with the wrongs against the girl he loved.

During this scene the lawyer had stood in speechless consternation, and old Ezra Wesvelle had tottered into the nearest chair, where he sat the picture of bewildered dismay.

Bradley consigned the Silver Witch to the care of Ilsley and his fellow-officer, and then sent for Mr. Wesvelle's car and accompanied him home.

During the drive thither Bradley told him the whole story of his daughter's disappearance, and he grasped the situation with more accumen than should have been credited to him.

"My poor daughter was in their way," he groaned. "When once the woman Editha had possessed herself of my property I should have shared the fate of her reputed husband."

"She would have been your widow before she was your wife," Bradley told him as he produced the letter which had disclosed not only their infamous plans for the future but enough to condemn them both in the past.

Of course Carrie Wesvelle was reconciled to her father, and of course she evidently became the wife of Fred Ilsley.

Mosely Danforth was sent back to the prison from which he had escaped, and the career of the Silver Witch ended in a sentence which would expire only when she would be old enough at least for repentance.

And, what was quite as satisfactory to Bradley, he received his thousand dollars.

READ THIS

To get our readers into closer touch with each other we have started a department for their exclusive benefit, entitled:

"The Greatest Mystery of My Life"

Every one can contribute, describing any strange, mysterious or unusual incident in your life. There is a mystery in every human career and a supernatural enigma in every human heart. Odd, baffling and bewildering incidents happen to everybody. It might be a ghostly visitation, a weird dream that came true, a voice from the dead on a phonograph record or a gypsy fortune-teller who read your palm correctly. Whether occult, mysterious or natural, send in the story and we will publish it for you. Your name and address must accompany the article as a guarantee of good faith—not necessarily for publication. Address MYSTERY MAGAZINE, Strange Experience Department, 168 W. 23d St., New York, N. Y.

BUILDING HIS ARK

"CHURCH of the Living God" is the name of a religion started by the Rev. J. E. Lewis, a negro preacher living on Terminal Island, in Los Angeles harbor. At present he has fifteen followers, but he expects many more before long, for he is not only a preacher, but a shipbuilder, and he is now engaged in building a ship in which he intends to sail to Liberia, the land of his birth, and there convert his own people.

"What kind of a ship is he building? Well, the framework is being constructed out of scrap lumber from an old house; for smokestacks he is using battered funnels taken from a wreck in the bay.

Mr. Lewis has been working on his ship for a year now, and he has already completed the hull frame, 85 feet long and 30 feet high. The ways are three short logs, and there are no keel-blocks at all. The cement ship walls, to be 13 inches thick, will require 125 tons of concrete. So far, five bags of cement have been donated. A gasoline engine and sails will drive the "yacht," and Parsons Lewis will be its captain.

A QUEER CASE

BY JOHN Q. A. HART

"I THINK I'll turn the Merton case over to you," the chief said to me one morning. "You will be well paid, and there isn't much to do; no one really cares whether the poor old man was poisoned or not, and the queer mystery will soon be dropped unsolved, very likely, without demur from any of the parties concerned."

"You do not rate my abilities very highly," said I, only half pleased. "And you know what trail I shall wish to follow if I undertake the case at all."

The chief uplifted his shaggy gray brows with an expression of impatient disapproval of what he deemed my unreasoning perversity.

"The girl is innocent," he said, with solemnity. "Nellie wouldn't hurt a mouse."

"Certainly not," I assented cheerfully. "Any woman is afraid of a mouse—even Borgia herself was, I dare say."

"Nellie Merton is no Borgia," was the emphatic answer. "Besides, she was sincerely attached to her uncle; she understood from the first that her cousin Clarence was to be the heir of the vast Merton wealth, so the motive is wanting."

"Yet Clarence herself has intimated that her manner has not seemed altogether consistent with innocence," I reminded my superior.

"Nonsense! he intends to marry her," was the impatient reply. "The girl is above suspicion. In fact, you are to suspect no person; you are to have no opinions which are not warranted by future developments. You are simply to become an inmate of the Merton mansion; you are to go there to supervise the decoration and refurnishing of the library. You are to watch everything and hear nothing; and from even Clarence himself you must conceal your identity."

I was not inclined to like the role which had been so peremptorily assigned me. I had already decided in my own mind that the young niece of the dead man had administered to him the poisoned draught; and I had some time before advised her immediate apprehension.

"Circumstantial evidence is easy enough to collect, and when she is once safely in prison she will break down and confess the whole thing—women always do!" was my logical argument.

It was on a damp and blustering spring morning when I at length arrived at the Merton mansion—a grand but somewhat ruinous stone structure in the midst of a natural park of ancient and gnarly chestnut trees.

With the wind screeching through the ragged branches, with the gusty drizzle pelting the closely-shuttered windows of the house, the place seemed singularly forbidden and desolate.

A grim Scotch serving-woman admitted me into a somber hall, and led the way to the no less somber library—which was to be dismantled and rearranged under my supervision.

Fortunately I really had some taste and experience in that line, and my alert chief had easily secured my introduction as a connoisseur to be implicitly trusted.

"Meester Clarence, he bes away," the woman said, as she left me at the library door; "there bes naebody hame but the young leddy—but she keeps awa' to hersel', seeing naebody since her sair trouble."

As her coarse shoes clattered down the hall toward the kitchen I entered the room. But I had scarcely advanced a step when in the dim light through the parted curtains of a far window I perceived a tall girl bending over a quaint old desk.

She was evidently unconscious of my presence, and she was nervously and intently occupied with the examination of a pile of papers which she was taking from an inner compartment.

That she was Nellie I knew instantly; but she was very different in look and manner from what I had imagined her to be. I had prepared myself to meet a vampire, beautiful perhaps, but with the sort of beauty which repels before the baleful charm begins to enthrall the senses of the disarmed victim.

But this girl possessed a loveliness which was angelic; her tall form was etheral in its grace; her sweet face was the saddest I had ever beheld. Her loose hair was like a halo about her bent head; her large blue eyes were mournful and wet with tears. She wore a breakfast gown of simple white, with a knot of mourning crape fastened at her throat.

I coughed a little unnecessarily as I advanced toward her, and at the sound she started wildly, with the crimson blood rushing in a hot tide from brow to chin.

"Oh!—I—I thought—it—it was Clarence!" she panted, with one hand pressing against her heart as if to still its frightened throbbing.

Her occupation, her fright, her dread of her cousin, all seemed to me but so many links in the chain of circumstantial evidence which I had mentally forged for her long ago. But I only assumed an expression of silent, questioning surprise.

"I was searching for something—for an important document my uncle left for me," she faltered, hastily, as if she thought I expected some explanation of her curious agitation. "It has been lost and never found. My cousin Clarence would be offended if he knew how I——" and then she checked herself with an embarrassment which was pitiful.

She seemed only just then to reflect that I was an utter stranger, and that I must consider such a confidence rather premature and peculiar.

"I regret having disturbed you," said I, politely ignoring alike her explanation and her agitation. "I am the person engaged to superintend the repairing of the library, and with your permission I will begin my work at once."

She bowed slightly, steadied herself with an effort, and then turned abruptly and left me to myself.

"She is the guilty one," I thought, with entire conviction, as I gazed somewhat wonderingly after the vanishing figure. "She has probably cajoled her uncle into making a will in her favor. She has feared he would repent—as likely he did—and she schemed to end his life before he could retract and leave everything to his favorite nephew. But if there was such a will, did he destroy it?—or has it indeed been lost and never found?"

And that was the question I casually propounded to Clarence some weeks later, when he had permitted me to

become sufficiently familiar with his somewhat haughty and reticent self.

"I should have the old desk broken up if I were you," I suggested, tentatively, when we were displacing that somewhat ruinous article of furniture for something more modern and ornamental. "There might be bonds or bank notes, or even an undiscovered will, in some of its thousand-and-one unguessable chinks and crannies."

For an instant he turned toward me a glance so furtive and uneasy, a visage so altered and lurid, that I felt absolutely dismayed, although I had already begun somewhat to dislike and distrust him.

"Nellie has been prating nonsense to you," he said, in needlessly emphatic tones, and after a strange pause. "My poor cousin is not accountable for what she says and does. Our uncle's sad death has really unsettled her reason, and I am afraid a mad-house will be her home in the not very remote future."

Nellie in a mad-house! Detective though I was, hardened as I was to sights and scenes of crime and woe, guilty as I had suspected her, I could not contemplate such a possibility without a shudder. In those days her despairing eyes and her mournful voice, the almost tragic intensity of a grief which she held in silence more eloquent than lamentation, had thrilled me with a feeling which I did not care to analyze! I was there to unearth guilt, and I did not purpose to lose my head and heart to a sinner even if she did not have the smile of a saint and the face of an angel!

"She keeps herself too much secluded," I ventured to remark, with some curiosity that she had not appeared among us for several days. "Perhaps she only requires society and diversion."

"To be frank with you," he answered, with another covertly uneasy glance, "we have been compelled to restrain her a bit. She seems inclined to violence, and I have thought best to hinder her leaving her rooms."

This state of affairs struck me as being rather extraordinary, especially as preparations for a quiet wedding had been begun. One threatened with insanity and a mad-house would be a fitter subject for a physician than for bridal excitements, I should have supposed. Nor did I understand the haste with which the ceremony was to be consummated. The uncle had been for but a few short months in his grave, and they should have waited until the secret of his death had been determined, I should have thought.

Altogether the case was the most baffling of any upon which I had ever been engaged. If Clarence suspected his cousin of crime—as he had once certainly intimated—why did he desire her for a wife? If he suspected his uncle had died a suicide, as he had sometimes asserted—why had he need to employ detective aid? If a servant or outsider were suspected, why had my chief enjoined me to conceal my identity from the master of the house?"

"My superior was right," I thought that evening as I went out for a stroll beneath the gnarly chestnut trees; "no one really cares whether the poor old man was poisoned or not. I have a mind to reveal myself to the master of the house and then drop the case. The queer mystery will never be solved."

But even then what my detective acumen had failed to penetrate fate was about to be disclosed to me.

I had stopped beside a gigantic hollow tree trunk, and as I passed there, sheltered by the thick foliage of a low branch which almost touched the sod beneath, I was aroused by the sound of a passionate voice just behind me.

Nellie was speaking, bitterly and defiantly, to her cousin.

"I will not go back to the house, to be your prisoner," she was saying. "I warn you not to goad me further. Leave me in peace; your wife I will never be! Leave me in peace, and I will never betray you, even though I loathe you."

"I intend that you shall love me, Nellie—that you shall be mine," he answered, with savage menace in his tones. "You must be my wife! When I have made my interests yours, then I shall feel secure, and not before. You know the alternative if you refuse, and I hardly need remind you that a bridal dress is preferable to a straight-jacket."

"You would send me to a mad-house!" she exclaimed scornfully. "You do not dare! You, whose liberty is in my keeping! You, whom I saw hold the poisoned glass to my uncle's lips! One word from me would condemn you, Clarence Merton!"

"Would it?" he laughed derisively. "I have employed detectives for nothing, my dear. I have forestalled your accusations; they have already suspected you; I have only to direct their services to turn the condemnation against yourself."

"No one would believe you," she returned disdainfully. "People are not so easily deceived; "they would soon learn to know you as you are—gambler and forger—the murderer of the uncle who had disinherited you for your vices, the destroyer of that uncle's last sacred will!"

"The will is not destroyed," he interrupted, in accents changed from menace to pleading. "I would not destroy what might be the only means of regaining your favor, Nellie. Be my wife and you shall have what our uncle intended for you."

At that instant the breeze rustled the foliage between us, and he perceived me.

"Spy! I might have guessed it," he muttered, as with the rapidity of a lightning flash he drew and leveled a pistol at my exposed head.

There was murder in his eyes, and in an instant I had raised my own revolver and fired.

I had aimed only to cripple him to prevent his escape. Yet even as the shots rang out simultaneously and I sprang around the broad tree trunk, he was gone. And Nellie lay senseless on the ground before me.

"Merciful God! have I killed her?" was my thought, as I stopped, my small smoking weapon in one hand, the other uplifted to shield my eyes from the blinding glory of the setting sun.

I bent over her, I called her name, but she lay still as death. And in that moment of untold anguish I knew she had become the one dear woman of all the world to me.

I lifted her head against my heart, and from a convenient pocket-flask I forced a few drops of brandy between her white lips, and presently, with a shiver, and a sob, she began to revive from what was only a faint after all.

My shot had not swerved from its mark, and even as Nellie looked consciously and with piteous questioning into my anxious face there was the sound of a muffled groan.

"His hurts are not serious," I said, soothingly, as she trembled and shrunk from me. "And you are to have your rights, my poor little martyr."

My captive had fallen with a disabled limb behind a clump of shrubbery, and he was sufficiently weakened and humbled to make a sullen admission of his crimes.

"I loved the girl," he said, with a savage sort of resignation. "Without her I don't care when the end comes, or how."

The end was a life-long imprisonment, and his cousin was soon in possession of the inheritance of which he would have deprived her.

And Nellie—well, Nellie has been my wife for twenty odd years.

A DETECTIVE'S MISTAKE

A Serial Story

By GILBERT MACKEY

CHAPTER ELEVEN.

THE TRIAL.

ANDY FENN regarded him narrowly, as did Sim Scudder, who had now resumed his seat by the boy's side.

Had this man kept the appointment made for him the night before by Bowery Mag? Andy would have given much to have known that this was so; and being so, who this mysterious person was that took such interest in moving against his friend.

"John Dorris, you solemnly swear that in the case of the State of New York against Alfred Constantine you will speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God!"

The clerk rattled through the formu'a in the usual way. The red-nosed restaurant keeper kissed the book unctiously, and resuming his seat, the district attorney began:

"Mr. Dorris, you are acquainted with the accused?"

"I am."

"State how that acquaintance began?"

"He came about my place courting my daughter Jennie, and I ordered him away."

"Were his attentions disagreeable to your daughter?'

"I don't know whether they were or not—they were disagreeable to me."

"Had your daughter an accept.d suitor at the time?"

"She had."

"Who was he?"

"Edson Gaylord."

"The murdered man?"

"Yes."

"Mr. Dorris, did you ever hear the prisoner threaten Edson Gaylord?"

"I did."

"On what date?"

"The afternoon of October 3. The day upon which the murder took place."

"What did he say upon that occasion?"

"Your honor, I object to all this!" cried the counsel for the prisoner, a wiry, nervous little man, springing to his feet.

"Your objection is overru'ed, Mr. Mackay," replied the judge, calmly.

The district attorney proceeded.

"Answer the question, Mr. Dorris," he said.

"He threatened in my presence to kill Edson Gaylord on sight. Called him vile names, and was so violent that I was obliged to order him out."

As these words were spoken Sim Scudder kept his eyes fixed upon the prisoner. The face of Al Constantine exhibited only contemptuous surprise.

"You may stand down, Mr. Dorris," said the district attorney, blandly.

"Stop a moment. I wish to question the witness," shouted the counsel for the prisoner, springing to his feet.

The red-nosed religionist resumed his seat.

"Why did you object to the prisoner as a suitor for your daughter's hand, Mr. Dorris?" he asked.

"Because he was not a man of God, sir," was the sniveling reply. "He was a sinner and a scoffer; his soul remained unsaved."

"And how about Edson Gaylord—a drunkard, a sporting character, a fast young man-about-town? Gentlemen of the jury, I call your especial attention to this fellow's reply."

"I decline to answer," retorted the witness angrily.

"Did your daughter give her consent to this marriage with Gaylord?"

"She did. He had her full consent, as well as my own."

"Father, that's a lie!" cried a young girl, springing up from among the spectators, and facing the court with flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes. "Upon the previous trial you prevented my presence; this time you see you have failed. Alfred Constantine was my affianced husband. I had refused the hand of Edson Gaylord again and again!"

For an instant utter silence reigned in the court-room. The father's face turned pale, while that of the prisoner burst forth with an expression of pleasure, strangely contrasting with his own features.

"Remove that woman," said the judge sternly; "there can be no such interruptions here."

The now weeping girl was escorted from the room. The prisoner's counsel, springing to his feet, followed her. Presently he returned and the trial went on. With the red-nosed Mr. Dorris the case for the people rested, and the defense was now begun.

Several witnesses were called to prove the general good character of the prisoner. At length the court crier shouted:

"Andrew Fenn!"

The well-dressed young fellow who sat beside the detective now arose, walked to the witness-stand, and was duly sworn.

"You are acquainted with the prisoner, I believe, Mr. Fenn?" said the nervous little lawyer, counsel for the defense, walking up and down.

"I am, sir," replied Andy, vigorously. "I have known Al Constantine all my life."

A sudden moisture was seen to gather in the eyes of the witness.

The judge saw it, the jury saw it, the prisoner saw it, too, and turning his face toward his faithful friend, for the first time he was observed to smile.

"H-m," said the counsel for the defense, "confine yourself to simply replying to my questions as they are put, young man—don't waste time in making additions of your own."

The nervous Mr. Mackay spoke with a pretense of strict adhesion to legal custom. Nevertheless, he noticed the favorable effect which this simple exhibition of sturdy friendship on the part of the witness had made upon the jury, and his seeming reproof was simply intended to make that effect still more telling by calling the attention of the jury to it again.

His little ruse succeeded. Several members of the panel were observed to glance admiringly at the boy.

"Now, Mr. Fenn, state briefly your knowledge of this case."

In as few words as possible Andy told all he knew. It corroborated the story told by Scudder and Barrytown to a hair. Evidently those present at the little banjo party upon the night of the murder had told the truth.

For a moment the lawyer paused, and glanced at his notes. Then turning to the witness, he again resumed:

"Mr. Fenn, did you observe particularly the banjo played by your friend upon the night of October 3?"

"I did," answered Andy.

He was prepared for this. He had been through the same questioning upon the previous trial.

"Is this the banjo?"

A broken and battered instrument was passed to the witness for examination.

"It is."

"You are certain?"

"I am. I presented it to Alfred Constantine myself."

"Good! Now, Mr. Fenn, perhaps you will tell us in what condition this banjo was after your friend returned from his encounter with the murdered man in the taxi, which he admits!"

"The parchment head was burst in, the strings were broken, and these dents were made in the wood of the drum."

"Taken altogether, it appeared to have been broken over some one's head?"

"That's the way it looked to me."

"You say the strings were broken. Can you tell us if they were all there?"

"They were. I am certain of it."

"Did you particularly observe this at the time?"

"No. I noticed afterward, when the banjo lay on my bureau, as we were about to retire, in my own room."

"Look at that banjo carefully, Mr. Fenn. You observe that one string—the silver-wound bass—is missing. Can you tell us in what manner it disappeared?"

"I can. It was pulled off the banjo by a man who entered my room early the following morning, as we lay in bed."

"You saw this man?"

"I did. I saw him softly raise the window and enter the room."

"What did he do then?"

"He crept to the bureau, picked up the banjo, pulled off the string, and, leaping from the window, disappeared."

"Did you attempt to follow him?"

"I looked out of the window, but could see no one."

"That will do, Mr. Fenn. I am through with the witness."

The nervous Mr. Mackay bowed to the judge and resumed his seat.

The prosecuting attorney now took Andy in hand.

"Mr. Fenn," he said, regarding the young man fixedly, "allow me to ask you one question. What did drink upon that particular night?"

"Only a few glasses of beer, sir."

"How many—ten?"

"No; not more than five."

"You had drank five glasses of beer?"

"I had."

"And were you in a condition to remember whether that banjo had the base string attached or not?"

"Certainly I was. I was as sober as I am now."

"I doubt it, Mr. Fenn. Beer sometimes has a powerful effect upon the heads of boys."

Here the prosecuting attorney winked at the jury with a knowing air.

"You say you saw this midnight intruder enter your room. Why, may I ask, did you not call out and give the alarm?"

"I was only half awake, and unarmed. I didn't want a bullet in my head."

"Just so. And when you did look out of the window he was nowhere to be seen?"

"That is it."

"What was your theory? Where do you think he went to?"

"I'm sure I don't know, sir."

"Was there time for him to run the length of your yard and escape over the rear fence?"

"Hardly, I should say. I was out of bed in an instant."

"Did it ever occur to you, Mr. Fenn that this singular experience of yours was we will say a dream, caused by too freely partaking of beer?"

"No, sir, it did not," retorted the boy, flushing up. "I saw the fellow as plainly as I see you now."

"Pray how was he dressed?"

"His face was covered with a black silk mask, his body enveloped in a long black cloak. I can tell you no more than that."

"How large a man was he?"

"Well, about the size of Maurice Barrytown, there," replied the witness, looking around upon those seated beneath the box.

"He'll make it out to have actually been me, next," muttered Barrytown, angrily. "What does he want to lug me into the matter for?"

Sim Scudder heard the words, and regarded the speaker with some surprise.

"Mr. Fenn," continued the prosecuting attorney, holding up a broken banjo string, "did you ever see this before?"

"I can't tell; all bass strings for banjos look alike."

"It was found grasped in the hand of the man who was murdered in the hack."

"I suppose then I saw it at the time."

"It was cut in two by Detective Scudder," continued the prosecuting attorney, "and let me remark right here that he would have served the interests of justice better had he allowed it to remain in its original condition. However, here are both pieces. Try them upon the banjo which you hold, and tell us how they fit."

Reluctantly Andy made the trial—the united portions of the string fitted to a hair. That it had been forcibly torn from the banjo was evident from the fact that both upon the portion remaining attached to the key of the banjo and upon the end of the string itself the silver thread was found unwound, and the catgut unevenly broken, which would not have been the case had it been cut by a knife.

"Do you think that is the missing string?" demanded the prosecuting attorney.

"I'm sure I can't tell. It looks like it. I can't say any more."

"It looks like it," repeated the prosecuting attorney, meaningly, "and when you say that, young man, you mean that you believe that it is. I think we shall have to assign that little midnight experience of yours to a brain over-

taxed with—let us throw the broad mantle of charity over your youthful follies, and say *beer*—simple beer. Mr. Fenn, you may stand down."

"I rest here, your honor," said Mr. Mackay.

Was the case ready for summing up? Every one thought so; but a slight stir in the court-room showed them their mistake. The prosecuting attorney announced that he had one witness to bring in rebuttal—a witness who had come forward but a moment before. To the surprise of every one, a young and modestly dressed woman was placed upon the stand. Andy Fenn looked at her in amazement. He saw, in a very different garb from that in which he had seen her the night before, none other than Bowery Mag. It was the woman who had enticed him into the Bayard street house, and no one else. Andy glanced hastily at her finger—the iron ring was gone. Mrs. Julia Brown was the name under which she was sworn, and she told a most peculiar tale. She had been a passenger upon the *Nevada* upon the night of the murder, and, what was more, had seen the murder done. Going out upon the deck from the ladies' cabin for a moment, her attention had been attracted by angry voices proceeding from the horseway. Looking around, she had seen a young man, with a large knife in his hand, leap into the hack and strike repeated blows at some one within whom she could not see. Then the young man leaped from the hack, holding a broken banjo in his hand, and ran toward the gentlemen's cabin. Her attention was called to the prisoner. She was certain that she recognized the murderer in him.

Why had she not come forward and testified to all this before? the question was asked. As a reason, Mrs. Brown stated that she was obliged, upon the following morning to start with her family for the West. The matter had preyed upon her conscience, however, and learning that the second trial was about to take place, she had that day come to New York from a Nebraska town, and placed herself in communication with the authorities at once. The effect of this woman's testimony was magical. Of the guilt of the prisoner there was in the hands of not a person present—save two—no longer a particle of doubt. These two were Detective Sim Scudder and Andy Fenn. Hurriedly the latter, by the advice of the detective, communicated his adventure of the evening before to the prisoner's counsel. He was recalled to the stand, and told his tale. This was received with incredulous surprise by the jury, and flatly contradicted by the woman herself. She produced letters from her clergyman in the Nebraska town, testifying to her entire respectability in every particular. The trial had assumed a most unexpected turn. It was now five o'clock in the afternoon, and the summing-up began. Upon this we need not dwell. Suffice to say that by seven the court had been vacated by all save those directly interested, and the case placed in the hands of the jury. It was life or death for Al Constantine now, and he grew more pale and worn as the moments passed. Andy Fenn, who had been allowed to sit by the side, encouraged him now and then with friendly words. The aged mother, of whom the prisoner had been the sole support, had, during the long period of his incarceration in the Tombs, passed away. Penniless, weak and utterly worn out beneath the weight of accusation of this terrible crime, save for the sturdy adherence of Andy Fenn, the unhappy youth was alone in the world. An hour passed. The court officers, the lawyers and Maurice Barrytown alone remain. But stay! We are wrong. Sim Scudder still struck to his post. He said but little, and seemed to avoid his friend Maurice entirely. Once, however, he advanced and shook the prisoner by the hand, and uttered a few cheering words. The lights burned low, the time sped on, until at length the clock struck the hour of nine. At the same moment there was a slight stir in the court-room of the General Sessions. The judge had resumed his seat.

"Prisoner, look upon the jury," said the judge, sternly.

With countenance as pale as death, Al Constantine stood upon his feet, and turned toward the twelve men who held his life in their hands.

"Gentlemen of the jury, have you agreed upon the verdict?"

"We have."

It was the foreman who replied.

"How say you?—guilty or not guilty?"

"Guilty of murder in the first degree!"

For a moment not a word was heard throughout the dim-lighted room save the passionate sobs of Andy Fenn. As for the wretched prisoner himself, he uttered not a word. His face turned a shade paler, his lips were seen to be tightly compressed, that was all. The judge turned his face slowly toward the convicted youth, and spoke briefly upon the enormity of his crime. Then, putting a black cap upon his head, he spoke again.

"Alfred Constantine, have you any reason to offer why the sentence of death should not be pronounced?"

"None, your honor," replied the youth, in clear, ringing tones, "save that, as I hope to meet my God, I am innocent of this terrible crime."

"Alfred Constantine," said the judge, solemnly, "you have had a fair trial, and have been convicted upon evidence so clear as to leave no reasonable doubt. For the willful murder of Edson Gaylord upon the night of October 3, 1880, it is the sentence of this court that you be returned to the prison farm whence you came, and from thence be taken upon the tenth day of December, 1881, at half-past nine o'clock in the morning, and hanged by the neck until you are dead, and may God have mercy on your soul!"

(To be continued.)

ATTENTION, SCENARIO WRITERS!

Get the New Book on Scenario Construction

SCENARIOS How To Write Them

By JAMES P. COGAN Price 35 Cents Per Copy

It contains all the most recent changes in the method of construction and submission of scenarios.

Sixty Lessons, covering every phase of scenario writing, from the most elemental to the most advanced principles.

This treatise covers everything a person must know in order to become a successful scenario writer.

All the newest wrinkles are clearly explained, and every known good point is shown, to increase your chance of selling your work.

FOR SALE BY ALL NEWS-DEALERS AND BOOK STORES.

If you cannot procure a copy, send us the price, 35 cents, in money or postage stamps, and we will mail you one, postage free. Address:

L. SENARENS, Number 219 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

STRANGE EXPERIENCES

THE GHOST'S VOICE

I WAS once a private detective, and had a strange experience while taking a vacation close to the White Mountains. The place I stopped at was on Mount Kearsarge, back of Mount Washington. A man named Peter Savage was the ace of our party, but had been a guest at the hotel a month before I got there. Everybody liked him, he paid his bills regularly and in fact seemed to have plenty money. But he never spoke about himself. No one knew anything about him. One day he was missing. The hotel-keeper set him down as a dead loss as his last bill was not paid, but he left his trunk and a dozen fine suits of clothes, several pairs of shoes, plenty underwear, a fishing outfit and a fine rifle in his room.

At the end of a week after he vanished the hotel-keeper, knowing I was a detective, asked me to try to locate Savage. Inquiry at the railroad failed to show that he departed in a train and none of the livery men had driven him away. The last seen of him he was heading down the mountain road toward the valley, saying he was going fishing in Little Sunapee Lake. Careful trailing on the road he followed brought to light an old settler in an unpainted shanty who had seen and spoken to him on the day he went away. This native said Savage asked where a certain side road led to, and being told it would bring him into a deep gorge back of Kearsarge, he suddenly turned into the road and was last seen disappearing around an abrupt bend. I at once started to follow the road and the old man sung out:

"Look out for the ghost's voice!"

"What do you mean?" I asked in surprise.

"Down that road we sometimes hear a strange wailing voice which says as near as I can make it out: 'Come on! Come on!' and it keeps repeating these words year after year just the same way in the selfsame tone."

I thought the old fellow was stringing me of course, so I just laughed and promised to look out for the strange voice. Along the road I went, and after an hour's travel I suddenly heard the voice calling in a human way. Tracing it up, I found it led me into the entrance of a small narrow passage in the rocks like a cave. There was an opening at the other end and a clump of what looked like moss outside of the exit.

At once I saw that the almost human voice was made by the wind sweeping into the cave at one end and out at the other. I saw a bird beyond the moss and flung a stone at the moss, causing it to vanish. It was only a covering over the tops of some bushes growing on the face of a cliff. Had I stepped on it I would have plunged down a hundred feet into the gorge below. The exit of the cave ended abruptly on the edge of the cliff, but the moss made you think there was firm ground for a few feet outside. I peered over the edge and, as I expected, saw Savage lying dead in the gorge. Lured by the artificial voice he had probably stepped on the moss while investigating the words, "Come on," and plunged to the bottom. We recovered his body afterwards, but as we could get no clue to his identity, he was buried by the authorities. And for fear the ghost's voice might lure other men to their doom, I personally walled up the mouth of the speaking cave, and that put an end to its evil character.

THOMAS VAN NESS.

FLOATING IN THE AIR

A FRIEND of mine named Mr. D. gave me the following account of a peculiar spiritual manifestation which might be interesting to your readers. He attended a dance one night at the house of a mutual friend, and found quite a large gathering of people in the parlor. A woman known as a medium had been invited and presided. The light at the gas fixture was turned so low that there was only a faint illumination in the room. Mr. D. seated himself at a long table, around which the guests were seated and, like them, placed his hands flat on the table. He said Mrs. X., the medium, was a stout, middle-aged woman of a most amiable character. There was a deathly silence in the room until Mrs. X. spoke, saying:

"My control is here."

There was a pause, and then the medium's voice suddenly changed to the hoarse, heavy bass of a man, saying:

"Since you request levitation, we will make an effort to lift you, but there must be no interruption."

It was Mrs. X. speaking in those changed, unnatural tones, entirely unlike her own sweet feminine voice. Everybody centered their eyes on the dim figure of the medium and saw that she had fallen into a trance, her head bent sidewise on her shoulder and her eyes closed. Mr. D. sat next to her and heard a faint rustling noise, and was conscious of feeling something like a cold wind fanning his cheek on the side toward the medium. He let his right hand shoot out sidewise and it came in contact with an invisible yet material substance. There was light enough to see that nobody intervened between him and Mrs. X., whom he could distinctly see, and yet he felt something strangely like a human body between her and himself. While he believed in spiritualism, he was one of the kind that want proof of unnatural phenomena. The feel of that unseen personality startled him, but he made no sound and replaced his hand on the table, all the while keenly watching the medium. He told me that it occurred to him that perhaps he had imagined he felt a material presence as he figured that the surroundings were liable to make a person nervous and expectant of something unusual.

A second movement of his hand convinced him that it was not a case of imagination, that something decidedly material, if spiritual, really intervened between him and Mrs. X., and moreover, it was now moving to the left. That aroused his curiosity to the fever point, but before he had time to investigate the thing any further, he and the rest of the people were startled to see the medium suddenly begin rising from her chair into the air. When she cleared the chair her figure straightened out like a

person reclining on a sofa and she continued to go up toward the ceiling with a rapid movement. The strain of excitement on Mr. D.'s mind was too much for him, and he sprang to his feet and turned up the gas. There was the medium suspended in the air over the table and everybody saw her. But the next instant she came down with a crash, swaying to one side and landed on the floor in a heap. Everybody jumped up and rushed to help her. She was bumped and bruised, but not badly hurt, and the shock had restored her from her trance-like condition. Instead of going to her aid, Mr. D. got on the table and carefully searched the ceiling for holes, through which he thought fine wires might have been let down by an accessory on the floor above to lift her in the air. But the ceiling was perfectly intact, without a hole as big around as a pin's head. If there had been, he could easily have seen them, as his eyes were within a few inches of the ceiling plaster. It mystified him, of course, and he got down, joined the others and made as careful examinations as he could of Mrs. X.'s person, to see if she was equipped with a belt or wires that might have accounted for her singular levitation, but he failed to find any. She was so shocked and shaken by her fall that it made her faint and sick and she had to be excused so she could go to her room, assisted by several of the ladies. When Mr. D. left the house he was convinced that he had witnessed a true example of levitation.

MISS MARTHA ANDREWS DIX.

THE HAUNTED HOUSE IN THE MARSH

WHAT I am going to write is so strange that most people will not believe my story, but here goes, whether they doubt me or not. I saw a real ghost. Now please do not laugh at me, Mr. Editor, for I am telling the truth. The way it happened was as follows: There was an old revolutionary mansion, in the last stages of decay, about a mile from my home. The river had risen years before all around it, surrounding the place with a swamp. The house stood in a wild tangle of woods, bushes and trees, most of its windows and doors broken, scarcely any point left on it, and part of the roof caved in. It had been vacant for fifty years, no one seemed to own it, and it had the reputation of being haunted. I had heard that the last family who lived there was named Beauregard, and it was said they had once been very wealthy and aristocratic, but their fortune had been lost by the gambling and speculating of a profligate son. He returned home drunker than usual one night, and when his father censured him for his dissipation, in a fit of fury, he struck the old gentleman a violent blow, knocking him down and killing him. The shock killed his mother, and the boy, filled with remorse, shut himself up in the old manor, and there the ghost of his father came back to haunt him. The few servants who remained swore they saw a spectral apparition of the old Colonel come from the wall, and the wild yells of his conscience-stricken son, as he cowered back in terror, arose to such a pitch his voice could be heard a great distance away. The specter according to the legend, pointed an accusing finger at the guilty youth, groaned dismally and there seemed to melt away. Deserted even by the terrified servants, the murderer drank heavier, and finally died a raving maniac. When I grew to young womanhood, an inordinate craving took possession of me to explore the interior of the old mansion, and verify for my own satisfaction the wierd stories of uncanny sights and sounds that people professed to see and hear about the dilapidated old place. That is what led to my encounter with the spook. One evening I had half a dozen boys and girls at my house to celebrate my twenty-first birthday, and around midnight we had exhausted all our amusements and demolished a most excellent repast prepared by my mother. In order to keep up the interest of my guests, I suddenly suggested a ghost party—a trip to the haunted house to see for ourselves if there were such things as the apparitions we had heard of so much.

As my plan met with approval we went down the road armed with two stable lanterns, and reaching the house, we went in. None of the old furniture had been removed, but everything was mildewed, moth-eaten, rotting and covered thickly with dust. The wind was swinging a broken shutter on a rusty hinge, making it creak, a flood of moonlight planted in the eastern windows, and a number of bats and birds, frightened by our intrusion, flew wildly out of the broken windows. At my suggestion, we scattered in three couples to explore the rooms. It was left alone with a youth I had known from childhood, and as there was no lantern for us, we decided to go right ahead without one. Up a flight of broken stairs we went to the front bed-room on the left of the big gloomy hall in which the tragedy of the Beauregards was said to have taken place. I told my friend that this was the haunted room, but he laughed skeptically, as he was not superstitious, and said he would like to make the ghost's acquaintance. As we stepped into the room we were greatly startled to see the skeleton of a man lying on the floor. To my mind it was the remains of Colonel Beauregard's dissolute son. I confess that the gruesome object made me extremely nervous, but did not discourage me. At any moment I expected to see the ghost of his father, for a distant church bell was tolling the hour of midnight, and the apparation was reported to materialize at that time. No specter appeared, however, and my friend stepped to the hall door to hail our friends to find out if anything had happened to them. Next to the antique bed a closet door stood ajar, and I opened it and stepped inside to investigate. The wind blew the door shut, leaving me in darkness, shivering with dread. In a panic I tried to open the door, but found no knob and failed at the same instant. I felt a cold, clammy hand on my bare shoulder and saw a white light begin to loom up out of the gloom behind where I stood. Terribly frightened, I uttered a piercing scream, meantime glaring at the light which grew more intense every instant until it assumed the dazzling glare of an arc light. It seemed as if I would grow mad with horror, and I screamed again and again and beat frantically on the door with my fists and begged my friend to get me out of there. Something that sounded like an evil, sneering laugh came from the dense gloom, and almost fainting I saw the light resolve itself into the distinct form of an old man clad in a garb worn half a century ago. His long hair fell down on his shoulders and he carried a cane in his hand as he seemed to glide straight toward me. I could discern a sardonic grin on his wrinkled features, and an air in his attitude that increased my fright. As he reached out a bony hand to seize me, I uttered one more despairing scream and fell in a dead faint. When I finally came to consciousness I was in bed at home with a doctor bending over me and my anxious parents watching with terrible suspense for my revival. They told me my friends had found me lying on the floor of the closet unconscious, and carried me home, wondering what had happened to arouse my fears. Sometimes I think I might have been victim of a strained imagination, but if there really are such things as ghosts, I am certain that I saw one on that dreadful night when I was locked in the closet of the haunted house.

ISABELLE W. ROGERS.

CURRENT NEWS

$4,500 FOR BERRIES

William Kincaid, buyer of dried berries at Springbrook, Oregon, says the banner load of dried raspberries for Oregon was that of W. T. West and son. The weight of the load was a little above 3,500 pounds and the check drawn in payment for the same called for $2,302.50. The berries were picked from bushes grown as fillers in a young prune orchard of eleven acres, and aside from the berries dried, West and son sold to the cannery berries amounting to more than 2,200, making a total of more than $4,500 received from the crop.

SPROUTING OAT GRAIN REMOVED FROM EAR

William Asurray, employed in a stable near Seventh street and Central avenue, Los Angeles, sprang an entirely new malady on the Receiving Hospital staff.

Arriving at the hospital with what he termed an "ear-ache," the surgeons started work on the affected ear.

They removed a Texas tick—an insect that is frequently found on mules. Then came a hard substance, undefined.

After working on the ear for a time in an effort to stop a miniature hemorrhage the surgeons extracted a grain of oat, fully developed and starting to sprout.

POISONS OF THE BORGIAS

A French doctor claims to have discovered the principle of the mysterious poisons with which the Borgias made away with their enemies. One strange thing about these poisons was that they worked in such subtle fashion that even physicians could not state with positiveness that any had been employed. It now seems certain that the Borgias used two poisons, one dissolving slowly and stealing gradually through the system, while the other was a soluble preparation of arsenic working instantaneous. Both preparations were unquestionably arsenical in composition.

CHILD HURT BY LOG

G. F. Williams, of Maryville, Cal., brought his little daughter from Rackerby to a local hospital, recently, for treatment for injuries she received when struck by a rolling log, a twig of which entered her mouth and pierced her neck, pinning her to the ground. An operation may be necessary, but it is believed the child will recover. Williams was sawing a log on the side of the hill, it is understood. His two small daughters were standing below on the hill watching him. As the log went hurtling down the side of the hill it struck both children. The other girl was only slightly hurt.

BONES OF ANCIENT CAMEL

That an ancient camel—the size of a jack rabbit—roamed this section 2,000,000 years ago, is a fact recently discovered by a group of University of Chicago geologists. Bones of the prehistoric camel and those of a horse of the three-toed variety were found in caves near The Dalles during a tour to inspect the formation of the Cascade Mountain range.

The geologists report that the horse, smaller and different from the horse of to-day, belonged to the miocene age. The teeth are carnivorous instead of being grinders. The old-time ship of the desert, according to the bones found, had no hump. Its feet bones are like those of the present day camel.

A PIE MACHINE

The fastest machine devised for making pies is operated by a foreman and six assistants and will turn out 1,800 pies an hour, according to the World's Work. The machine is provided with eighteen revolving pieholders which move around an oblong table or platform; two crust rollers, one for the lower and the other for the upper crust, a set of four automatic moistening brushes and a pie-trimming wheel. The six operators of the machine place the crusts, fill the pies and remove them from the table when the operation of moistening and trimming has been automatically completed. A smaller machine, the working principle of which is similar, except that the table is round instead of oblong, will turn out 600 pies an hour when operated by three piemakers.

GERMANY'S HEAVY LOSS IN BIRTHS DUE TO THE WAR

The British Medical Journal summarizes the report of a Danish committee which, under the direction of Dr. C. Doring, has been collecting information as to the cost of the war in terms of human life. As quoted by the New York Medical Journal the results as regards "Germany, indicate that within the first year, reckoning from April, 1915, onward, the births were 21 to 24 per cent. fewer than in the last year before the war. By the end of war the accumulated deficit of births amounted to 3,500,000. The deaths were more than 2,000,000 above those which might have been expected under ordinary conditions.

"To a definite loss of more than 5,500,000 human beings is to be added a long continuing decline of the birth rate, and for years to come a higher rate of mortality," says the report.

TO SEARCH FOR KRUGER'S GOLD

To recover more than $3,250,000 in gold, part of the fortune of the late Oom Paul Kruger, once President of the Transvaal, which is believed to be cemented in the hold of the bark Dorothea, sunk off the coast of Zululand, is projected as a result of improvement in the science of salvaging sunken ships. The Dorothea is among the list of wrecks of eight treasure ships, bearing a total of $27,750,000 in gold, located off the African coast, which are regarded by a leading expert as most likely for salvage.

The gold is reported to have been shipped by Kruger prior to 1904, when he was credited with a fortune of $3,750,000. Some years ago a syndicate was organized to attempt its recovery, and a Government steamer, the Alfred Noble, was sent to do the work of salvage, but failed.

Captain A. P. Bardinier, a salvage expert, has located thirty-eight hulls of sunken vessels off the coast of South Africa, and believes that one-quarter of them may be redeemed.

$10 BILLS MADE OUT OF ONES

Working in conjunction with the New York police, United States Secret Service agents have rounded up a gang of alleged counterfeiters who they say have been operating for the last month. The alleged counterfeiters, seven men and a woman, are held on a charge of "altering and raising the denomination of United States currency."

The prisoners who are held for the Federal Court describe themselves as Mary Callahan, Martin Lavin, John O'Reilly, William Schneider, Walter Kirk, John Morgan, William Giddes and William Tierney.

According to the police of the West 135th Street Station, Mary Callahan entered the gentlemen's furnishing goods store of F. Ichelson, of No. 2606 Eighth avenue, and gave a clerk what looked like a $10 bill. The police say Ichelson, upon examining the bill, saw that it was a $1 bill with the corner of a $10 bill pasted onto it. He detained the woman and called the police. After twenty hours of questioning, the police say, the woman confessed, implicating others. The arrest of Lavin, O'Reilly and Schneider followed. Early last evening others were arrested. The police say that the alleged counterfeiters would take a $1 bill, paste one corner of a $10 bill on it and then select a store where there was a rush of business and pass the bill.

DYES FROM SNAILS

Along the coast of New England there is a common species of sea snail that is a living bottle of indelible ink. It is a crimson ink, very beautiful and quite as durable when applied to lingerie as any that one can buy. The mollusk in question is found clinging to rocks just below the level of low tide, and the ink is contained in a whitish vein beneath the skin of its back. The fluid is at first yellow in color, but when a garment marked with it is exposed to the sun it turns green, then blue, then purple and finally to a brilliant unchangeable crimson. This is one of the two species of whelks from which in ancient time was obtained the famous 'Syrian purple'—a dye considered too splendid for the adornment of any but kings and nobles. Indeed, it was so costly that none but the very rich could afford it, wool dyed with it being worth $175 a pound. The liquor was procured by crushing the snails in a mortar. Six pounds of it were required to stain a pound of wool, the ready-woven fabric being soaked in it and afterward exposed to sunlight. Stuffs thus dyed are said to have had a remarkable color effect, presenting changeable hues to the eye, like modern "variable" silks. The chemistry of to-day, however, is able to produce Tyrian purple in the laboratory, as one merely of a long list of coal-tar derivatives that come under the general head of "aniline" dyes.

PASTE WHICH PRESERVES WATERMELONS

Commercial chemistry, applied to the watermelon, plays a big part in delivering to the Northern consumer, hundreds, perhaps thousands of miles from the producing district, reasonably-priced melons which are crisp, fresh, and just ripe enough for maximum enjoyment. The chemistry involved is a special paste which is applied to the stem end of the watermelon by the shipper. This paste furnishes complete protection to the stem end, a point where otherwise decay is likely to set in. Before this paste was originated, the loss of entire cars of watermelons from decay was not infrequent.

So necessary and valuable is the paste, that a regional director of railways this season issued an order that unless melons were pasted they would not be accepted for transmission except by prepaid freight. The regional director stipulated that shippers use a paste recommended by F. C. Meiss, of the United States Department of Agriculture.

One of the good things about this watermelon paste which accomplishes such important results is that it is inexpensive. One quart of paste will treat an entire carload of watermelons. In order that the paste will not disfigure the melons, it is prepared with green coloring matter, pistachio being used.

Using copper or enamel-ware vessels, the watermelon shipper dissolves four ounces bluestone in two pints boiling water, and three ounces powdered alum in one pint water, adding to the latter 4½ ounces rye flour and mixing to a smooth paste. When the bluestone is thoroughly dissolved, he pours the solution into the paste, stirring the mixture thoroughly. It is now brought to the boiling point and cooked for five minutes, then cooled and strained through cheese-cloth. Last of all, before placing in glass jars or tin cans lined with paraffin, sealed air-tight, the paste is colored with one-half ounce of pistachio green.

GRAIN DUST EXPLOSIONS

At the request of Julius Barnes, national wheat director, the United States Grain Corporation has made an appropriation of $50,000 for an extensive campaign to eliminate the great loss annually caused in grain mills and elevators by grain dust explosions. The Department of Agriculture has detailed Dr. D. H. Price and George W. Brown of the bureau of chemistry to handle the campaign and to cover the entire field of safety for grain and flour storage plants. In order to carry on their work these experts have divided the country into four districts, the Eastern, the Central, the Northwestern and the Pacific.

The Grain Corporation is anxious that there should be throughout the country a more complete understanding of explosions of grain dust and their prevention in order that protection might be given to the stocks scattered broadly throughout the United States. It is not a matter of common knowledge that grain dust and flour when mixed in certain proportions of air and exposed to a spark explode like gasoline in a cylinder. Many of the most destructive fires in elevators and mills have been traced in their origin to this ignition of explosive dust. The losses in the past have been tremendous, the stocks of food destroyed in some of these fires being large enough to maintain large armies for several months.

According to figures of the Department of Agriculture dust explosions caused the destruction of four of the largest grain and cereal plants in the United States between March, 1916, and October, 1917. These disasters caused the deaths of twenty-four persons, injuries to thirty-eight, and damage to the extent of $6,000,000. Among these was an explosion and elevator fire in which was destroyed grain sufficient to supply bread rations to 200,000 soldiers for a year.

The work of the staffs of the divisions will include demonstrations of the explosive quality of what appears to be harmless dust, with practical illustrations of preventive measures. Some of the "safety first" rules advocated by the experts of the bureau of chemistry are:

Construct the plant of fireproof materials. Keep the plant clean and as free as possible from accumulations of dust. Install an efficient dust collecting system. Prevent the use and production of flames and sparks of any kind. Prohibit smoking and the carrying of matches. Install some improved system of protection against fire.

The Grain Corporation in its fire prevention work will also instruct the employees of mills and elevators in the necessity for proper precaution.

TAMING AN ELEPHANT

The elephant's freaks of malignity when it is out of temper are remarkable, and the only one who has control over it is a strong-willed keeper. The keepers of one zoological institution had a long struggle with a big male elephant in attempting to remove a chain from around one of its tusks and replace it with a stronger one. Chains were attached to its forelegs and run about its neck. They were also secured to its tusks, and the free motion of the head was checked. In this condition the pachyderm was chained to the front of his inclosure. It was found that one of the clamps at the tusk was insecure, and it was decided to replace it. To do this the animal had to be thrown, and a rope was first attached to his hind legs.

The rope was passed through a block, and, the chains at his forefeet being held securely, the men hauled away slowly but surely, drawing the elephant's feet from beneath him. He struggled fiercely in resistance, but the block and tackle were too much for him. He was finally drawn down upon his haunches, after which the chain holding his right forefoot was crossed to the left side of the enclosure and drawn taut. The difficulty was then to roll the animal over on his side. Several men entered the enclosure and pushed and tugged at him, but their efforts were without avail until a rope passed under his right foot and over his back enabled the men to concentrate their efforts. He rolled over on his left side.

The keeper then jumped on the elephant's head, and while he was in this helpless condition the iron clamp on the tusk was removed and a stronger one put in its place.

When the work was done the chain on the right forefoot was taken off, and the animal was permitted to regain an upright position, the men jumping off at a signal from the superintendent. The foot ropes were then eased, and the elephant stood up once more, and was drawn close to the front, where his shackles were taken from his feet.

QUEER FOOD

A peculiar dainty and nourishing dish is made with the iguana, the flesh of which is as white as that of a chicken and just as palatable; though the appearance of the reptile, with its scaly, black-spotted green coat, is more repulsive than either crocodile or alligator. To the inhabitants of the West Indies and the Bahamas the iguana is a much-valued source of food, and is hunted down by means of dogs, which are muzzled to prevent them using their teeth and damaging the iguanas, which are sold alive, or killed, salted and barreled for home consumption. The flesh of the reptile is usually served up boiled or steamed, together with a dish of clarified iguana fat, sometimes seasoned, into which the very savory meat is dipped as it is eaten. The eggs of the iguana are also much relished, and are like hens' eggs in taste, but wholly filled with yolk and do not become hard in boiling. The horrid iguana of San Domingo is much appreciated by the bons vivants in the West Indies, the flesh tasting just like roebuck's, although infinitely more delicate.

The common green lizard is eaten with much gusto by many tribes in Africa, and in the south of Portugal the gray lizard is eaten, both baked and fried, the dish in both instances tasting rather like chicken. In Brazil a green-and-yellow snake is consumed by all classes; while among the Sardinians the adder is frequently added to broths and soups.

Crocodile flesh is publicly sold in the meat markets of Senaar, in Africa; and in Siam one sees the carcasses hung up for sale like sheep in the butchers' shops. The flesh of this great aquatic lizard tastes somewhat like veal, although to Occidents it has a faint fishy smell. In South America the cayman, or alligator, affords a dish, when boiled or fried, which is said to be just as tasty as rabbit. Both crocodile and alligator eggs are much prized by certain nations. The natives of Madagascar are particularly fond of the first and the Siamese prize the second as a great dainty. In flavor the eggs are said to resemble those of a duck that feeds mostly among the sea garbage on the shore, plus a very faint seasoning of musk. It is the common sea turtle, though, which has won the highest commendations as an edible reptile. It is a species used in the preparation of the hereditary dish at most of the city banquets throughout England, the supply being sent from Jamaica and the Antilles, the favorite resort of these much-prized reptiles, which travel hundreds of miles in order to deposit their eggs.

FAT MEN

The fattest man of whom we have any record was Daniel Lambert, who was born in the city of Leicester, England, on March 13, 1769, and died in Stamford, June 21, 1809. His father was keeper of the prison in Leicester. He was at a very early age very fond of those exercises and amusements which are comprehended under the denomination of field sports, racing, fishing, and cock fights. He always possessed great muscular power, and at the age of nineteen could lift great weights and could carry five hundredweight with ease. It was at this age that he began to grow corpulent. Soon after he succeeded his father as keeper of the prison at Leicester, and it was through sedentary life his bulk acquired, the greatest and within a year after he entered upon his confined and most rapid increase. Just before his death he weighed 739 pounds. He measured three feet one inch around the leg, and nine feet four inches around the body. His coffin was six feet four long, four feet four inches wide, and two feet four inches deep. The wall of the house in which he died was taken down to admit of the removal of the body, which was drawn to the churchyard and slid down an inclined plane into the grave. His height was five feet eleven inches.

Who is the heaviest man in the world at present? Charles Jackson, of Brockton, Mass., claims the distinction, and he packs around 608 pounds of fat, muscles, and bones to prove it. So far as is known, there is nobody who has more, in that section, at least.

Charles Jackson has everything made to order. His clothing, shoes, hats, and even his furniture and his home, are specially constructed. When he sits down in an ordinary chair it collapses into kindling. The floors of his new house were made extra strong, as a safety precaution. Those of the old house trembled when he walked on them. And Jackson is growing all the time in weight. He is only six feet tall. When he was married thirty-three years ago, he weighed 176 pounds.

The Saturday *Blade* has recently mentioned a number of men who are nearly in Jackson's class. Among these was Sam Irwin, a 'bus driver, of Three Rivers, Mich., who claims to be the biggest man in the United States who is an active worker. When Irwin's photograph was taken for the *Blade*, he weighed 480 pounds, but it is said that he at times has tipped the scales at 515 pounds. Giving him credit for that weight, he still is ninety-three pounds under the Brockton man.

W. T. Brinson, of Waycross, Ga., weighs 585 pounds in his stocking feet, but at one time he was fifteen pounds heavier. It took him fifteen years to lose his fifteen pounds.

THE DEEPEST WELLS IN THE WORLD

The Hope Natural Gas Company, of Pittsburgh, enjoy the reputation of having twice broken the world's record for deep wells within the past two years. One of these deep borings known as Martha Goff well No. 4190, is located eight miles east of Clarksburg, W. Va. Drilling was begun April 16, 1916, and on March 4, 1918, a depth of 7,386 feet have been reached, thus exceeding by 37 feet the depth of the well hitherto known as "the deepest well in the world," located at Czuchow, Upper Silesia, Germany. At this depth the steel cable parted, over 5,000 feet down, leaving the tools and 2,000 feet of cable in the hole, and the well had to be abandoned. This record has since been surpased in the I. H. Lake well No. 4304, drilled by the same company 6½ miles southeast of Fairmont, W. Va. Drilling began here August 5, 1916. On June 18, 1919, a depth of 7,597 feet had been reached, 193 feet greater than the depth of the Goff well. At this depth misfortune again overtook the company. The tools stuck in the drill-hole and the cable parted, leaving tools and 4,000 feet of cable in the hole. "Fishing" was unsuccessful, and this well also has been abandoned. These wells were sunk in the hope of reaching the rich gas-bearing and oil-bearing "Clinton" (Medina) sand, which extends across eastern Ohio and is supposed to underly the part of West Virginia in question. The failure to reach the petroliferous bed was due to an unexpected thickening of the Devonian shales, one of the overlying series. In the case of the Goff well interesting fossils and other geological material were secured, and a valuable series of temperature measurements was made. According to C. E. Van Orstrand, of the U. S. Geological Survey, the temperature at 7,000 feet was found to be 172 degrees F.

LOVE OF GORILLA FOR BOY

Visitors have the curious sensation of spying in one of the large outdoor cages of the lion house a boy, a complacant and intellectual-looking gorilla, a blanket, a table and a hat.

At what happens the crowd looks on spellbound—half puzzled, half amused. There is nothing remotely resembling an orderly performance. Boy and gorilla merely fraternize. Sometimes the one, sometimes the other, takes an airy swing on the rope.

The queerly assorted pair wander about hand in hand. The lad talks to the ape and the ape understands. Some times the latter is naughty, and the former has to scold. But mainly their reigns the harmony of a well-founded friendship. It is that sympathetic understanding between the two which affects onlookers like a revelation of the semi-uncanny. "There seems some affinity between them," says the superintendent of the gardens. "Opportunity of seeing anything like this has not occurred before. We have hitherto failed to keep a gorilla. Specimens have speedily collapsed, and during their brief stay they have been savage.

"This gorilla is lent to the Gardens (on Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays if the weather is fine) by Major Penny. The boy and the gorilla come together in a taxi, and they also leave in a taxi."

"It is very remarkable," said Mr. Peacock. "The gorilla came to this country a year ago in company with a chimpanzee. He held himself completely aloof from that chimpanzee. But as soon as he reached human society he unbent and became sociable.

"As accounting for his friendly demeanor, it is said, with what truth I am unable to certify, that he was nurtured in Africa by a negress."

OUR TEN-CENT HAND BOOKS

Useful, Instructive, and Amusing. They Contain Valuable Information on Almost Every Subject

No. 1. NAPOLEON'S ORACULUM AND DREAM BOOK.—Containing the great oracle of human destiny; also the true meaning of almost any kind of dreams, together with charms, ceremonies, and curious games of cards.

No. 2. HOW TO DO TRICKS.—The great book of magic and card tricks, containing full instructions on all the leading card tricks of the day, also the most popular magical illusions as performed by our leading magicians; every boy should obtain a copy of this book.

No. 3. HOW TO FLIRT.—The arts and wiles of flirtation are fully explained by this little book. Besides the various methods of handkerchief, fan, glove, parasol, window and hat flirtation, it contains a full list of the language and sentiment of flowers.

No. 4. HOW TO DANCE is the title of this little book. It contains full instructions in the art of dancing, etiquette in the ballroom and at parties, how to dress, and full directions for calling off in all popular square dances.

No. 5. HOW TO MAKE LOVE.—A complete guide to love, courtship and marriage, giving sensible advice, rules and etiquette to be observed, with many curious and interesting things not generally known.

No. 6. HOW TO BECOME AN ATHLETE. Giving full instruction for the use of dumbbells, Indian clubs, parallel bars, horizontal bars and various other methods of developing a good, healthy muscle; containing over sixty illustrations.

No. 7. HOW TO KEEP BIRDS.—Handsomely illustrated and containing full instructions for the management and training of the canary, mockingbird, bobolink, blackbird, paroquet, parrot, etc.

No. 9. HOW TO BECOME A VENTRILOQUIST.—By Harry Kennedy. Every intelligent boy reading this book of instructions can master the art, and create any amount of fun for himself and friends. It is the greatest book ever published.

No. 10. HOW TO BOX.—The art of self-defense made easy. Containing over thirty illustrations of guards, blows, and the different position of a good boxer. Every boy should obtain one of these useful and instructive books, as it will teach you how to box without an instructor

No. 11. HOW TO WRITE LOVE-LETTERS.—A most complete little book, containing full directions for writing love-letters, and when to use them, giving specimen letters for young and old.

No. 12. HOW TO WRITE LETTERS TO LADIES.—Giving complete instructions for writing letters to ladies on all subjects; also letters of introduction, notes and requests.

No. 13. HOW TO DO IT; OR, BOOK OF ETIQUETTE.—It is a great life secret, and one that every young man desires to know all about. There's happiness in it.

No. 14. HOW TO MAKE CANDY.—A complete hand book for making all kinds of candy, ice-cream, syrups, essences, etc., etc.

No. 18. HOW TO BECOME BEAUTIFUL.—One of the brightest and most valuable little books ever given to the world. Everybody wishes to know how to become beautiful, both male and female. The secret is simple, and almost costless.

No. 20. HOW TO ENTERTAIN AN EVENING PARTY.—A complete medium of games, sports, card diversions, comic recitations, etc., suitable for parlor or drawing-room entertainment. It contains more for the money than any book published.

No. 21. HOW TO HUNT AND FISH.—The most complete hunting and fishing guide ever published. It contains full instructions about guns, hunting dogs, traps, trapping and fishing, together with description of game and fish.

No. 22. HOW TO DO SECOND SIGHT.—Heller's second sight explained by his former assistant, Fred Hunt, Jr. Explaining how the secret dialogues were carried on between the magician and the boy on the stage; also giving all the codes and signals.

No. 23. HOW TO EXPLAIN DREAMS.—This little book gives the explanation to all kinds of dreams, together with lucky and unlucky days.

No. 24. HOW TO WRITE LETTERS TO GENTLEMEN.—Containing full instructions for writing to gentlemen on all subjects.

No. 25. HOW TO BECOME A GYMNAST.—Containing full instructions for all kinds of gymnastic sports and athletic exercises. Embracing thirtyfive illustrations. By Professor W. Macdonald.

No. 26. HOW TO ROW, SAIL AND BUILD A BOAT.—Fully illustrated. Full instructions are given in this little book, together with instructions on swimming and riding, companion sports to boating.

No. 27. HOW TO RECITE AND BOOK OF RECITATIONS.—Containing the most popular selections in use, comprising Dutch dialect, French dialect, Yankee and Irish dialect pieces, together with many standard readings.

For sale by all newsdealers, or will be sent to any address on receipt of price, 10c. per copy, in money or stamps, by

FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher,
168 West 23d Street, New York.

LITTLE ADS

Write to Riker & King, Advertising Offices, 118 East 28th Street, New York City, or 8 South Wabash Avenue, Chicago, for particulars about advertising in this magazine.

AIDS TO EFFICIENCY

WRITE THE WORDS FOR A SONG. We revise poems, write music and guarantee to secure publication. Submit poems on any subject. Broadway Studios, 165C. Fitzgerald Building, New York.

AGENTS

POWERENE IS EQUAL TO GASOLINE at 5 cts. a gallon. Salesmen and agents wanted. Exclusive territory granted. Powerene is guaranteed to be harmless to remove and prevent carbon, doubling the life of all gasoline motors, saving repairs, adding snap, speed and power. An amount equal to 20 gallons of gasoline will be sent to any address in the U. S., charges prepaid, for $1. W. Porter Barnes, Dept. 10, Santa Rosa, Cal.

TOY BALLOONS, AIRSHIPS. Make big profits supplying dealers, peddlers, fairs. Samples and prices 30 cts., postpaid. Ask for our special $1 assortment. $1. Pressler, 20 East 17th St., New York.

FRECKLES POSITIVELY REMOVED. [illegible] beautiful. Venus de Milo Freckle Cream [illegible] postpaid. Agents wanted. Leaflet free. [illegible] guaranteed. Milo [illegible] Austin, Texas.

HIGH STRIKERS earn $25 to $[illegible] at fairs, resorts, public [illegible]. $31 [illegible]. Write for catalog. Moore Bros., Dept. Rich Lumber, Mich.

AGENTS, make big profit selling our [illegible] perfumes, cold creams, face powders, [illegible] medicines, etc.; beautiful high-grade [illegible]; exclusive territory; sample soap free. Lacassian Co., Dept. 259, St. Louis, Mo.

SELL BESCO MALT AND HOPS [illegible] Everybody buys. Big sales. Big [illegible] proposition. Get in early. Dept. K, Beardsley [illegible], Rock Island, Ill.

ART AND DEN PICTURES

PICTURES, snappy girl photos. Just the thing for that Den or Clubroom. A fine young private collection. Set of ten beautiful photos 20 cents. Girk-Carey Co., 128 State St., Rochester, N. Y.

REAL PHOTOS, Artists' Models. Bathing Girls, etc. Samples, price list, 20 cts. Select Club, K., Box 1776, Kansas City, Mo.

ORIENTAL DANCER: she does real Salome wiggle, sealed 25 cts. Hamilton Mfg., Barnes City, Iowa.

BATHING GIRL PICTURES 12 cts.; sixteen varieties $1; refunded if displeased. Roseleaf Club, St. Louis, Mo.

REAL PHOTOGRAPHS, sure to please. Send 25 cts. Hamilton Company, Barnes City, Iowa.

10 REAL CLASSY girl photos from life and catalog 10 cts. Arrow Publishing Co., Syracuse, N. Y.

AUTO

FORDS START EASY IN COLD WEATHER. Will run 34 miles per gallon on cheapest gasoline or half kerosene, using our 1920 carburetors. Increased power. Quiet for motors; can attach them yourself. Big profits to agents; money back guarantee; 30 days' trial. Air Friction Carburetor Co., 175 Madison St., Dayton, O.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

MILLIONS are suffering with Rheumatism. Most important discovery of the age. A herb that actually drives the most stubborn case of Rheumatism entirely out of the system. People write us and say they are astounded at the results, especially on the kidneys. Just think of the money-making possibilities. Representatives wanted. $1.12 pound, postpaid; 10 pounds $5, express paid. Rheumatism Herb Co., Ventre, California.

BUSINESS AND TRADE SECRETS. Your chance to make money. No capital needed. Send 25 cts. for key to wealth. W. E. Jones, Rexton, N. B.

FREE THREE MONTHS to get acquainted mine investments, news. THE WESTERN MINER, [illegible] W. 17th Ave., Denver, Col.

$10 MAIL 5 cts. (coin). Very interested. Bawickas Bros., McGill St., Worcester, Mass.

COINS AND STAMPS

STAMPS, 50 VARIETIES, Transvaal, Brazil, Peru, Cuba, Mexico, etc., and Album 10 cts. 1,000 mixed 60 cts. 60 different U. S. 25 cts. 1,000 hinges 10 cts. [illegible] 1 buy stamps. C. Stegman, 5937 Cote Brilliante, St. Louis, Mo.

STAMPS: 105 mixed, incl. China, etc., 2 cts., Album (500 pictures), 3 cts. Bullard, No. 20, Sta. A, Boston.

CORRESPONDENCE TUITION

MOVIE ACTING Home Study Course; send for Prof. Celne's great book; $1.00. Studio, 47 W. 42d St., New York City.

FOR THE HEALTH

GRUBE'S WITCH HAZEL BULLETS for piles, contain Witch Hazel, Bellad. Nut Gall, Golden Seal, Strain. [illegible] usually sudden relief. At drug stores or parcel [illegible] cts., coin. Kenzelor Chemical Co., 4504 Cottage Grove Ave., Chicago.

GEO. REYNOLDS, who weighed 240 lbs., was cumbersome, ailing and uncomfortable, reduced his weight [illegible] lbs. at rate of one pound daily by using Oil of Korein. Obtainable at busy drug stores everywhere in America.

HERB DOCTOR RECIPE BOOK 10 cts. Worth $5. Teaches how to make medicines from herbs for all diseases. Over 250 recipes and herb secrets. Indiana Herb Gardens, Dept. 5M, Hammond, Ind.

FOR SALE

100 LETTERHEADS and **100 ENVELOPES** for a dollar bill. Liberty Press, 1102 Barry Ave., Chicago, Ill.

RABBIT HOUNDS, foxhounds, coon, opossum, skunk, [illegible] dogs, setters, pointers. Browns Kennels, [illegible]

SILK REMNANTS. Largest packages yet offered. Square of stamped silk in every package. 12 cts. Mills Agency, Portland, Me.

HELP WANTED

LADIES WANTED, and **MEN,** too, to address envelopes and mail advertising matter at home for large mail order firms. Spare or whole time. Can make $10 to $25 weekly. No capital or experience required. Book explains everything; send 15 cts. to cover postage, etc. Ward Pub. Co., Box 77, Tilton, N. H.

WANTED—Stories, articles, poems for new magazine. We pay on acceptance. Typed or handwritten MSS. acceptable. Send MS. to Woman's National Magazine, Dept. 941, Washington, D. C.

MEN wanted for detective work. Write J. Ganor, former U. S. Govt. Detective, Danville, Ill.

SECRET SERVICE OPERATIVES AND DETECTIVES are in demand. Earn big money. Travel everywhere. Fascinating work. Learn this profession by home study. Particulars free. American School of Criminology, Dept. M, Detroit, Mich.

BE A DETECTIVE. Opportunity for men and women for secret investigation in your district. Write C. T. Ludwig, 521 Westover Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.

MUSICAL

WRITE THE WORDS FOR A SONG. We write music, guarantee publisher's acceptance. Submit poems on patriotism, love or any subject. Chester Music Co., 920 So. Michigan Ave., Suite 249, Chicago, Ill.

WRITE A SONG —Love, Mother, Home, Childhood, patriotic or any subject. I compose music and guarantee publication. Send words to-day. Thomas Merlin, 293 Reaver Block, Chicago.

WRITE THE WORDS FOR A SONG. We revise poems, write music and guarantee to secure publication. Submit poems on any subject. Broadway Studios, 165C. Fitzgerald Building, New York.

HAVE YOU SONG POEMS? I have best proposition. Ray-Hibbeler, D104, 4046 Dickens Ave., Chicago.

CORRESPONDENCE TUITION

MOVIE ACTING Home Study Course; send for Prof. Celne's great book; $1.00. Studio, 47 W. 42d St., New York City.

PATENTS

PATENTS trade marks copyrights. Write for information. L. G. Grossman Victor Bldg., Washington, D. C.

PERSONAL

WRITE THE WORDS FOR A SONG. We revise poems, write music and guarantee to secure publication. Submit poems on any subject. Broadway Studios, 165C. Fitzgerald Building, New York.

MARRY FOR WEALTH and happiness. The Guiding [illegible] the way. Mailed free and sealed. [illegible] Drawer 712, Uniontown, Pa.

MARRY RICH. [illegible] directory of select list. Satisfaction guaranteed. Select Club, Dept. A, Emporia, Kansas.

SIXTH AND SEVENTH BOOKS OF MOSES Egyptian secrets, Black art, other rare books. Catalog free. Star Book Co., Box 1, Camden, N. J.

GET MARRIED. Best matrimonial magazine published. Mailed free. American Distributor, Blairsville, Pa.

LONELY MAIDEN, 28, would marry. Write for picture. Box 150K, Syracuse, N. Y.

MARRY; MANY RICH. Particulars for stamp. Mrs. Morrison, 3033 W. Holden St., Seattle, Wash.

IF YOU WISH a pretty and wealthy wife, write me [illegible] a stamped envelope and I will answer. Lillian Stroud, Station H, Cleveland, O.

NAMES, ADDRESSES, DESCRIPTIONS of [illegible] desiring marriage; sent sealed 20 cts. Select Club, R., Topeka, Kan.

SCIENTIFIC

YOUR LIFE STORY in the stars. Send birth date and dime for trial reading. Eddy, 840 East 55th, Chicago, U. S. A., Apartment 73.

SPIRITISM—WHENCE? Biblical secret. Hundred pages. Ten cents. Joseph Greig, Educator, Parker, S. Dak.

MISCELLANEOUS

SCHEMER MAGAZINE, Alliance, Ohio, prints winning schemes every month, so helps subscribers make more money; 32 pages; see for yourself; trial 4 months, 25 cts.; copy, 10 cts.

"$10,000 FOR MSS. SLIPS," book and 10 fortune cards, 25 cts. Sell for 15 cts. each, keep $1. Cook's Publisher, Rockport, Ind.

CRAP PERCENTAGE EXPOSED and sample of marked cards, both 25 cts. S. Waldon, Oaks, N. Y.

MAGIC DRAWING BOOK, 10 pretty cards and big mail, 10 cts. Durso, Dept. 39, 25 Mulberry, N. Y. City.

MYSTERIOUS BALLSHAM answers your love questions. Send 25 cts., refunded if dissatisfied. Roseleaf Club, St. Louis, Mo.

WRITE THE WORDS FOR A SONG. We revise poems, write music and guarantee to secure publication. Submit poems on any subject. Broadway Studios, 165C, Fitzgerald Building, New York.

KODAKERS: How would you like to get a 8x11 enlargement of your best negative free? Drop us a card right now asking about it. Films developed 10 cts. per roll, prints 3 cts., 4 and 5 cts. each. Satisfaction guaranteed. Ford's Foto Studio, Ellensburg, Wash.

BOYS: 20 latest Hot Air Cards with big bunch of magazines, printed matter sent you for 13 cts., coin or stamps. Empire Supply Company, 24 Norris Ave., Pawtucket, R. I.

TOBACCO or Snuff Habit cured or no pay. $1 if cured. Remedy sent on trial. Superba Co., PC, Baltimore, Md.

GENUINE INDIAN BASKETS—Wholesale and retail. Catalogue. Gilham, Highland Springs, Cal.

STAMMERING

ST-STU-T-T-TERING and stammering cured at home. Booklet free. Walter McDonnell, 18 Potomac Bank Bldg., Washington, D. C.

WANTED TO BUY

WANTED TO BUY. Cottonwood timber in brakes of 10M and up; state distance from railroad and facilities for logging. Interstate Lumber Co., Wright Bldg., St. Louis, Mo.

Cured His RUPTURE

I was badly ruptured while lifting a trunk several years ago. Doctors said my only hope of cure was an operation. Trusses did me no good. Finally I got hold of something that quickly and completely cured me. Years have passed and the rupture has never returned, although I am doing hard work as a carpenter. There was no operation, no lost time, no trouble. I have nothing to sell, but will give full information about how you may find a complete cure without operation, if you write to me, Eugene M. Pullen, Carpenter, 679F Marcellus Avenue, Manasquan, N. J. Better cut out this notice and show it to any others who are ruptured—you may save a life or at least stop the misery of rupture and the worry and danger of an operation.

Get Rid of That FAT

FREE TRIAL TREATMENT

Sent on request. Ask for my "pay-when-reduced" offer. My treatment has reduced at the rate of a pound a day. No dieting, no exercise; absolutely safe and sure method. Let me send you proof at my expense.

Dr. R. NEWMAN, Licensed Physician.

State New York, 286 Fifth Av., New York, Desk A-326

BOILS or PIMPLES

If you are troubled with boils or pimples I want to give you the joy surprise of your life by sending a proof treatment of the wonderfully curative natural eradicating elixir given me by an Indian in my training camp. It cured me; is working marvels for others. *Why not you?* Enclose 12c to cover my expense of this notice and mailing. Address: James W. Brosly, D5, Portland, Maine.

DOUBLE CHIN Get a small box of Oil of Korein capsules at the drug store; follow directions, if you wish a small, handsome chin and attractive figure

SORE LEGS HEALED

Open Legs, Ulcers, Enlarged Veins, Eczema, healed while you work. Write for book "How to Heal My Sore Legs at Home." Describe your case.

A. C. LIEPE, 1457 Green Bay Avenue, Milwaukee, Wis

My Nose Shaper

corrects ugly noses in the privacy of your own home without interfering with business. 30-day free trial. All other facial defects corrected by the Woodbury system. Send 3-cent stamp for booklet.

W. H. BAILEY, M.D., 235 Empire Bldg. 11th Year in Denver, Colo.

Be an Artist

[illegible] Cartoons, Commercial, [illegible] Illustrating, [illegible] Lettering, [illegible] Classes. *Write for terms and list of successful students.*

Associated Art Studios

118 Flatiron Bldg., N. Y.

To You, Miss or Mrs., About Your Hair

This is a plain talk of real importance to you because it is absolutely honest and the information is genuine.

You have been losing your hair. It comes out on the comb or brush. The steady loss, as well as the fact that your hair is becoming thinner and weaker, is worrying you.

You have tried different lotions, tonics, washes, etc., that were recommended or which you saw advertised. None of these have done you any good. They were not the right remedy for your hair.

Well, dear Madam, here is a message of good cheer. It comes from a man.

Years ago when I was almost entirely bald I came across an old Cherokee Indian who induced me to try his recipe for growing hair. He told me that the principle of this formula was used by all Indians, male and female, wherever they found a weed of it.

You know that Indian women (and men too) have long, beautiful hair.

So I tried the recipe. The compound was an ointment for the scalp. It had a bad odor and was rather nasty. But my hair grew—and has continued to grow. Since then I have never had any trouble with my hair. At the age of 66 I now possess an abundant growth and visit the barber each month to have it cut. Once, after an accident, when I was compelled to remain in the hospital for several weeks, it grew so long that it was like a woman's flourishing hair growth.

The recipe I obtained from the old Indian savant and it has been used by many others. I have had the formula modernized by a practical chemist so that the cosmetic ointment now has a more pleasant odor and is more agreeable to apply to the scalp and base of the hair.

It contains no alcohol nor any of those ingredients which tend to dry the hair, scalp and roots. On the contrary, it is a fertilising compound. The Indian principle is that it must contain elements from the three natural Kingdoms. This rule is maintained in the recipe.

I want you to try this cosmetic on your scalp. It can be applied when retiring each night, only a few moments being required. It is likely you will find a very satisfactory result, almost from the outset.

Now make no mistake; this is not a lovely scented preparation. There's nothing fancy about it. The name is Kotalko and you shall have the recipe free of cost by writing for it. Your druggist can supply the cosmetic according to the recipe; or you may obtain the compound from me, ready to use. Send me your name and address. The recipe will come free. If you would like a proof box of the cosmetic, enclose 10 cents, silver or stamps. My address is: John Hart Brittain, BD-101, 150 East Thirty-second St., New York, N. Y.

AT LAST

BE A SUCCESS! GET AHEAD! If you want to forge ahead and be a success; if you want to make good with your Employer, no matter what your trade or business may be, write for particulars, enclosing stamp for reply. Not a correspondence course.
H. C. ARGENBRIGHT, Box 131, Newport News, Va.

100 FAT? If you wish to reduce 10 to 60 lbs., be slender, enjoy normal figure, attractive personality, better health; live longer and happier, write for new FREE BOOK, an easiest way to get this. Korein Co., NC-601, Station F, New York.

COME TO THE
"MOVIES"
At My House—To-night
50,000 Boys Made Happy

REAL MOVING PICTURES

A Real Moving Picture Show In Your Own Home

Remember, this is a Genuine Moving Picture Machine and the motion pictures are clear, sharp and distinct.

The Moving Picture Machine is finely constructed, and carefully put together by skilled workmen. It is made of Russian Metal, has a beautiful finish, and is operated by a finely constructed mechanism, consisting of an eight wheel movement, etc. The projecting lenses are carefully ground and adjusted, triple polished, standard double extra reflector, throwing a ray of light many feet, and enlarging the picture on the screen up to three or four feet in area. The light is produced by a safety carbide generator, such as is used on the largest automobiles. This throws a dazzling white light of 500 candle-power on the screen.

It is not a toy; it is a solidly constructed and durable Moving Picture Machine. The mechanism is exceedingly simple and is readily operated by the most inexperienced. The pictures shown by this marvelous Moving Picture Machine are not the common, crude and lifeless Magic Lantern variety, but are life-like photographic reproductions of actual scenes, places and people, which never tire its audiences. This Moving Picture Machine has caused a rousing enthusiasm wherever it is used.

This Moving Picture Machine which I want to send you FREE, gives clear and life-like Moving Pictures as are shown at any regular Moving Picture show. It flashes moving pictures on the sheet before you. This Machine and Box of Film are FREE—absolutely free to every boy in this land who wants to write for an Outfit, free to girls and free to older people. Read MY OFFER below, which shows you how to get this Marvelous Machine.

Read These Letters From Happy Boys!

Shows Clear Pictures

I have been very slow in sending you an answer. I received my Moving Picture Machine a few weeks ago and I think it is a candy, and it shows the picture clear just as you said it would. I am very proud of it. I thank you very much for it and I am glad to have it. I gave an entertainment two days after I got it. Leopold Lamontagne, 54 Summer Ave., Central Falls, R. I.

Sold His for $10.00 and Ordered Another

Some time ago I got one of your Machines and I am very much pleased with it. After working it for about a month I sold it for $10.00 to a friend of mine. He has it and entertains his family nightly. I have now decided to get another one of your machines. Michael Ehereth, Mandan, N. Dak.

Would Not Give Away for $25.00

My Moving Picture Machine is a good one and I would not give it away for $25.00. It's the best machine I ever had and I wish everybody could have one. Addie Brosky, Jeanesville, Pa. Box 34.

Better Than a $12.00 Machine

I am slow about turning in my thanks to you, but my Moving Picture Machine is all right. I have had it a long time and it has not been broken yet. It is even better than a $12.00 Machine but would not swap mine for it. Robert Linneberry, care of Revolution Store, Greensboro, N. C.

How You Can Get This Great Moving Picture Machine—Read My Wonderful Offer to You

HERE IS what you are to do in order to get this amazing Moving Picture Machine and the real Moving Pictures: Send your name and address—that is all. Write name and address very plainly. Mail to-day. As soon as I receive it I will mail you 20 of the most beautiful premium pictures you ever saw—all brilliant and shimmering colors. These pictures are printed in many colors and among the titles are such subjects as *"Betsy Ross Making the First American Flag"*—*"Washington at Home,"*—*"Battle of Lake Erie,"* etc. I want you to distribute these premium pictures on a special 30-cent offer among the people you know. When you have distributed the 20 premium pictures on my liberal offer you will have collected $6.00. Send the $6.00 to me and I will immediately send you FREE the Moving Picture Machine with complete Outfit and the Box of Film.

50,000 of these machines have made 50,000 boys happy. Answer at once. Be the first in your town to get one.

M. CROFTON, Secy.,
615 W. 43d Street, Dept. 489, New York

PLEASE USE COUPON

Free Coupon
Good for Moving Picture Offer

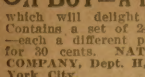
Simply cut out this Free Coupon, pin it to a sheet of paper, mail to me with your name and address written plainly, and I will send you the 20 Pictures at once. Address

M. CROFTON, Secy.,
615 W. 43d St., Dept. 489, New York

OH BOY—A PACKAGE OF FUN

which will delight you beyond measure. Contains a set of 24 jolly burlesque cards —each a different postcard. Sent postpaid for 50 cents. NATIONAL SPECIALTIES COMPANY, Dept. H, 32 Union Square, New York City.

NEW SCIENTIFIC WONDER



PRICE 12c. SILVER ONLY. BIG FUN

BOYS You apparently see thru Clothes, Wood, Stone, any object. See Bones in Flesh. A magic trick novelty FREE with each X Ray.

MARVEL MFG. CO., Dept. 13, NEW HAVEN, CONN.

ACROMATIC TELESCOPE

Made upon new scientific principles, nicely brass bound with powerful lenses, scientifically ground. Travelers, hunters farmers, boy scouts and everyone needs a telescope. Have you ever enjoyed the marvels of a telescope? Each telescope guaranteed just as represented, or money promptly refunded. Send 99 cents to-day.
EASTERN NOVELTY CO., Dep. 63177 E 93St. New York

VENTRILOQUISM

Taught Almost Anyone at Home. Small cost. Send today 3-cent stamp for particulars and proof.
S. A. SMITH, ROOM B 628 [illegible] BIGELOW ST., PEORIA, ILL.

BECOME A TATTOOING ARTIST

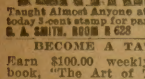
Earn $100.00 weekly. Prof. Temke's new book, "The Art of Tattooing," explains all about Tattooing Materials used, mixing Inks, etc. Postpaid, 50 cents.
Prof. Temke, 1010 Vine, K, Cincinnati, Ohio.

LOVERS GUIDE, or An Easy Road to Marriage

Tells "How to Court a Bashful Girl." "How to Woo an Heiress." "How a Lady Should Manage Her Beau to make him Propose Marriage." "How to Catch a Rich Husband." "How to Win the Favor of Ladies." "Wedding Ed-uette, &c., &c. All subjects helpful to lovers. 10C POSTPAID

YANKEE PUB. CO., TILTON, N. H.

NEW DOUBLE ACTION BABY HAMMERLESS REVOLVER

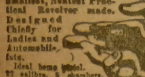


Smallest, Neatest Practical Revolver made. Designed Chiefly for Ladies and Automobile. Ideal home pistol. 22 calibre, 5 chambers. Best steel. Nickel plated. Never can be tapped at factory. Accidental discharge impossible. Safe and sure, quickest firing. When you need a pistol you need it bad and quick, at every second counts. Every lady and automobilist should have one; there is no better or safer made.
Price by insured mail $4.38 Big Catalog Free.
BATES GUN CO., DEPT. 7, MELROSE, MASS.

FREE AEROPLANE

Boys! Here's the great aeroplane for you. Modeled after famous machine that lifted the Eagle Because of its long-soaring flight in the Successive aerial contests for the right of the ground. Flies well a long time. Length 28 in. Wing spread 20 in. Can be had for selling 20 packages Bingo Perfumed Talcum Powder at 10c each. Order today. Send no money.
Bingo Co. Dept 528 Binghamton, N.Y.

FREE MILITARY AIRSHIP AND PARACHUTE



Boys! here's the great military model airship. Large 3-ft. model with fuselage, also parachute and dropping device. Can carry bombs." Will fly for miles a height of 1000 ft. and can be used over and over again. Great chance for boys to study aerial warfare. Just order 12 packages of Bingo perfumed talcum we sell at 10c a pkg. No trouble to sell. Return money and this wonderful airship is yours. Send today we trust you. Boys, if you want real sport send for this airship
BINGO CO., DEPT 779 BINGHAMTON N.Y

FREE TO BOYS

Real Rugby Football, Strong, Serviceable Cover, best Rubber Bladder. FREE for selling 20 packages of Bingo Perfumed Talcum Powder at 10c each. No trouble to sell. Write to-day. Send no money. Extra premium if you order now.
Bingo Co. Dept. 780 Binghamton, N.Y.

The Power House of the Universe

Read about the wonderful storehouse of Cosmic Energy in Mrs. E. M. Paget's "How I Know That the Dead Are Alive." The Red Darkness, or astral plane. How the soul leaves the body at death described in detail. 262 pages, canary cloth, $1.60 postpaid, sent parcels post C. O. D. for examination, if desired. MATTHEWS DAWSON, Chevy Chase, Md. Dept. K.

HOW TO FOREVER DESTROY Superfluous Hair

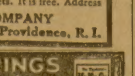
Until the present edition is exhausted, we will send

FREE to any one

our big beauty book, which tells exactly how any lady, privately at home, can destroy forever superfluous hair, moles, warts and other facial blemishes, so they will *never return. No pain,* danger, or bad effect. *No injury* to the complexion. Don't experiment with dangerous apparatus, liquids, powders, for this simple method is endorsed by scientists and doctors. The free book explains all, and other beauty secrets. It is free. Address

D. J. MAHLER COMPANY
610 H, Mahler Park, E. Providence, R. I.

HO-RO-CO BRINGS YOU A BIG INCOME



Hundreds of Ho-Ro-Co Agents make big incomes, why not you? Ho-Ro-Co toilet articles, soaps, household necessities, and remedies sell everywhere at splendid profits. Get wonderful Free sample case offer.
Ho-Ro-Co 190 Locust, St. Louis.

Oh Boys, Girls!
Great Sport with CLAXOPHONE

Voice Thrower

Throw your voice under the table, back of a door, into a trunk, desk in School, any old place. Big FUN fooling Peddlers, Policeman, Friends, anybody. This Claxophone is a small device that lays on your tongue unseen, always ready for use by anyone. Claxophone with full instructions, also Set of Secret Writing Tricks, all sent for only 10c one dime. No stamps
CLAXO TRICK CO.,
Dept. S New Haven, Conn.

Why be Fat?

Become Slim This Season

Have you heard about the new system for weight reduction?

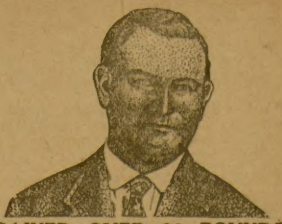
You may eat and drink all you need. There is no tedious exercising. Take a little oil of korein at mealtimes and when retiring; also follow the simple, clear directions. A loss of weight, ten to sixty pounds (whatever you need to lose), may be expected by this safe and pleasant system of fat reduction. At the druggist's get a small box of oil of korein capsules, and start at once. Be of normal size, with good figure and attractive appearance, agile, quick-witted, healthier and more efficient. By reducing weight now you are likely to avoid one or more diseases, heart weakness, sunstroke, apoplexy, etc., and to add many years to your life. Remember—*oil of korein.* Become thin and stay so. Show others this advertisement.

BOOK ON
DOG DISEASES
And How to Feed
Mailed free to any address by the Author
H. CLAY GLOVER CO., Inc.,
118 West 31st Street, New York

FREE BOYS AIR RIFLE

This fine Rifle free for selling only 15 pieces of sun Jewelry at 10c. each. Write for Jewelry today.
COLUMBIA NOVELTY CO., Dept. 23 East Boston, Mass.

He Quit Cigarettes



GAINED OVER 30 POUNDS

"I smoked cigarettes ever since a boy. From six to eight sacks of tobacco I used weekly," states Mr. S. H. Ferguson.

Cigarettes were doing me great harm. I became so nervous that I couldn't sleep until I smoked. Each morning I had an awful taste in my mouth.

"Several times I tried to quit by willpower, but it just seemed that I would go wild if I couldn't have cigarettes.

"I had almost given up hope of ever quitting until one day I sent for a free book by Mr. Woods that told me what to do. After leaving the way, I quit easily in 3 days and haven't touched a cigarette in years. I have gained over 30 pounds and cannot praise the method too highly. I say to every cigarette smoker—if you can't quit without help get this book," so says Mr. Ferguson, of Crumps Park.

The foregoing remarks are like those of many other men who have been freed from the habit of smoking cigarettes, pipe or cigars or who have been chewing tobacco or dipping snuff excessively.

Get this book. It is free; postpaid to you. Cut this out and show others.

Write at once to Edward J. Woods, TB-101, Station F, New York, N. Y.

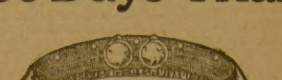
Reduce Your Bust

or other fat 2 to 4 inches in three weeks with 1 jar of COSI Obesity Cream; external, harmless; no massage. For men and women, sample, 10 cents. Address
CURRIE & CURRIE, 2911 Ave. G, Dept. D. BROOKLYN, N.Y.

GET ON THE VAUDEVILLE STAGE

I tell you how! Fascinating profession. Big salaries. Experience unnecessary. Splendid engagements always waiting. Opportunity for travel. Theatrical agents endorse my methods. Thirty years' experience as both manager and performer. Illustrated book, "All About Vaudeville," FREE. Send 6 cents postage and state age and occupation.
FREDERIC LA DELLE, Sta. 224, JACKSON, MICH.

60 Days' Trial



Send only 10 cents in cash or stamps and your waist measurement. Upon receipt we shall immediately send you a Genuine Sanden Electric Belt. In a few hours it will reach you by parcel post. If you like it pay the postman only $4.75, and a Belt of $10 value will be yours. Wear the Belt for 60 days, and if satisfied, recommend it to your friends. If not satisfied, return the Belt to us immediately and we shall return your money as soon as the Belt reaches us. If you suffer from debility, backache, rheumatism, dyspepsia, or any trouble due to a run-down system, this is an opportunity you should not miss. The Sanden Hercules Belt is the best in the world, and the offer we make is absolutely genuine. Uncle Sam will see that we carry it out and that you are protected.

The Hercules Co., 1416 B'way, New York, Dept. B

BE SURE TO READ

"Moving Picture Stories"

A Weekly Magazine Devoted to Photoplays and Players.

PRICE SIX CENTS PER COPY

The Best Film Magazine on Earth

FOR SALE ON ALL NEWS-STANDS.

Magnificent Colored Cover Portraits of Prominent Screen Performers!

32 PAGES OF READING **OUT EVERY FRIDAY**

Each Number Contains Portraits and Biographies of Actors and Actresses—Five Stories of the Best Films on the Screens—Elegant Half-tone Scenes from the Plays—Interesting Articles About Prominent People in the Films—Doings of Actors and Actresses in the Studios—Lessons in Scenario Writing—Poems, Jokes and every bright Feature of Interest in Making Moving Pictures.

THIS LITTLE MAGAZINE GIVES YOU MORE FOR YOUR MONEY THAN ANY OTHER SIMILAR PUBLICATION ON THE MARKET.

Its authors are the very best that money can procure; its profuse illustrations are exquisite, and its special articles are by the greatest experts in their particular line. No amount of money is spared to make this publication the very best of its kind in the world. Buy a copy NOW from your newsdealer, or send us 6 cents in money or postage-stamps, and we will mail you, postage free, any number you desire.

HARRY E. WOLFF, Publisher, **166 West 23d Street, New York City**